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Introduction

Globalization is a new term coined to express one of the most outstanding characteristics of human life in the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. For the first time in the history of mankind, people are aware and know what is happening all over the world, no matter the distance or the differences of any kind. This phenomenon has been the consequence of the progress in telecommunications and the new capacity of managing and exchanging information through the world, due to new computer technology. This first technological and informational globalization made possible another one in the fields of economy and finances. The problems arising in many countries in the wake of the economic crisis that began in 2007 made many people aware of the need, going ahead in this process, to look for new ways of globalizing politics. This was also the moment in which the necessity of focusing on moral problems with a global perspective became evident. New terms, like “global ethic” and “global bioethics,” appeared. These are not only new and specific fields of analysis and debate, but questions that affect the core of ethics, making it necessary to rethink and reconstruct the entire discipline.

Globalization, A Linguistic Novelty

“Globalization” is a new term. It proceeds from *globus*, the Latin translation of the Greek word *sphaîra*, round body, ball, sphere, or globe. The word was frequently used by scientists and in philosophical writings in antiquity, but without any moral connotation. On the contrary, the word *kósmos*, whose primary meaning was “order,” and also “world order” or “universe,” acquired in late antiquity the meaning of the realm of sin and death, as opposed to the spiritual kingdom of holiness and life (John. 12:31; 14:30; 17:9,16; 18:36. Eph. 2:2; 6:12.

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New International Version). This moral meaning was even more evident in the words *mundanus*, *mundane*, and *mundanitas*, which in Medieval Latin meant *vanitas*, vanity, or *mundi amor*, mundane or worldly love. This negative moral meaning came to Western languages, giving in English the word “worldly,” secular, sophisticated, or not spiritual. This is perhaps the reason why it was necessary to coin a new word with a more descriptive and positive meaning, deriving it from “globe” and not from “world”; the result being the term *global*. This word was frequently used in classical English. But the abstract noun *globalization* is new in the English language. It appeared for the first time in the third decade of the twentieth century, and it began to be generally used during the 1960s and 1970s. From English, it entered into other languages as *Globalisierung*, *globalisation*, *globalización*, etc. The French language has also the word *mondialisation*, and the same happens in Spanish, *mundialización*. In any case, the word globalization has today a specific meaning, different from that of *mondialisation* or *mundialización*. This meaning, completely new, appeared during the last decades, as a consequence of some important changes happened in science and technology, and also in the political and economic life of the societies.

The Global Village

The possibility of knowing in “real time” the things happening in other territories or on different continents has been remote during the major part of the human history. Only recently, due to the development of telecommunication, has the entire world become an integrated electronic network in which everyone is connected with all others. Human beings are now interconnected in a web of interdependency with changes and developments on one side of the world affecting the other. This revolutionary phenomenon was called by Marshall McLuhan “the global village.” For the first time in history, the world has become one big village, in which all things are present and inextricably interconnected. McLuhan remembered that George Washington, two centuries ago, once remarked, “We haven’t heard from Benjamin Franklin in Paris this year. We should write him a letter” (McLuhan & Powers, 1989, 80). In the information era, he stresses, the “real” world of things has been substituted by another that is “virtual,” the world of information.

Globalization of Economy

The first globalization, prompted by the development of telecommunications, opened the door to other types that are more subtle. The second has happened in the field of economics and finance, with the integration of national economies into international or global ones, through trade, foreign direct investment, and capital flows. After World War II, Western politicians adopted Keynesianism as the way of building the new welfare state. It reigned, especially in Europe, until the crisis

of 1973. This crisis was interpreted by many as the death knell of the welfare state. As an alternative, many returned to the theories of the neoclassical school, lead in this movement by the economists of the Chicago school, based on monetarism, economic liberalism, little government intervention, and free markets. These ideas were implemented by politicians during the 1980s, when Margaret Thatcher (UK prime minister, 1979–1990) and Ronald Reagan (US president, 1981–1989) came to power. They also became the core principles of the main economic international agencies located in Washington (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the US Treasury Department) during the 1990s. After 1989, this economic ideology became generally known as the “Washington Consensus,” an expression coined by John Williamson, an economist from the Institute for International Economics based in Washington. As a consequence, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), promoted international agreements in order to lower the barriers to international free trade, facilitating the flow of goods, capital, services, and labor. Thus, the entire world has become, for the first time in history, a global free market.

This second process of globalization has also had a negative side. The economic collapse of the years 2007–2012 has generally been interpreted as the consequence of the drastic distinction by the neoclassical school between economy as a science and applied economy, in an attempt to make of Economics a value-free science, centered only on the so-called economic “facts,” without any “value” compromise. Milton Friedman said in 1970 that the only social responsibility of business is to increase its profits; profit is the sole value to be taken into account. This oversimplification is seen as one the causes of the economic crisis, interpreted by many as a crisis of values (i.e., a moral crisis).

Today, it seems evident that in trying to be value-free, economics chose a value option, perhaps one that was not the most beneficial. There is no possibility of making human decisions without values. In avoiding value questions, economists transmitted to the public opinion the wrong idea that there is only one important value, the economic one – profit. This is what George Soros calls “market fundamentalism,” most frequently seen during the last decades in Western countries. “The functions that cannot and should not be governed purely by market forces include many of the most important things in human life, ranging from moral values to family relationships to aesthetic and intellectual achievements. Yet market fundamentalism is constantly attempting to extend its sway into these regions, in a form of ideological imperialism. According to market fundamentalism, all social activities and human interactions should be looked at as transactional, contract-based relationships and valued in terms of a single common denominator, money. Activities should be regulated, as far as possible, by nothing more intrusive than the invisible hand of profit-maximizing competition. The incursions of market ideology into fields far outside business and economics are having destructive and demoralizing social effects. But market fundamentalism has become so powerful that any political forces that dare to resist it are branded as sentimental, illogical, and naive.” (Soros, 1998, xxvi).

The theorists of the neoclassic school stressed that value questions do not pertain to scientific economics, but to another branch they call applied or normative economics, which is the realm of politicians and managers. But politicians were obliged by the same ideological bias to focus all their work around the economy and the economic problems of their societies, the main goal being to increase incomes and the welfare of their states. Hence, the essential role played by economics in the new politics, both national and international. To manage the economy of the new global situation, the politicians of the six major economies created in 1975 the so-called G6 (Group of Six), which became G7 in 1976, G8 in 1997, and G20 in 2009. It has been the main economic council of wealthy nations, but not a global economic forum. As a consequence, some anti-globalization movements appeared, in an attempt to avoid the negative consequences of the economic process of globalization. They have organized riots during the summits of the G6 and G20 (Mittelman, 2000).

As politicians are the agents of public policies, managers are the leaders of private corporations. Management has also been frequently conceived as a “value-free” activity. Some managers, on the contrary, have stressed the importance of values in the promotion of quality and excellence in organizations. Hence, the importance of value questions in some new business theories. Terms like *virtue*, *quality*, *excellence*, *stakeholders*, *good citizenship*, *corporate social responsibility*, and so on are beginning to play a new role in business ethics. Trying to promote these practices, the United Nations launched in 2000 the UN Corporate Social Responsibility Global Compact program, seeking to mainstream ten moral principles in business activities around the world in the time of globalization. The importance of the Global Compact is due to the fact that, today, most important private industrial corporations are transnational and, to some extent, global, unlike the governments, which are by definition national. This means that the economic power of industries is in some cases greater than that of nations and governments.

Lack of a Global Polity

In the globalization era, economies are inextricably interconnected, surpassing the national borders and territories in which politicians and governments can take decisions. The consequence is that the globalization process has shown problems that can only be managed and perhaps solved in the international arena. This means that the globalization of trade and the economy demand another more difficult process, the political one. This is, perhaps, the biggest issue of humanity’s present situation, in which the global economy coexists with a political system based on an old idea of nationality.

There is a general consensus that politics must find new ways of managing global problems, first because international bodies have been, up to now, subordinate to national interests, and, second, due to the fact that there is neither a real, nor perhaps desirable, global government. An intermediate solution may be the so-called “global governance,” a novelty that appeared after the fall of the national

security model prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Global governance tries to manage global processes through institutions such as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private entities. The question is whether bodies like these are capable of limiting the individual power of states in a positive way, going beyond market *laissez-faire* and private economic interests, and then solving the collective problems of mankind. In any case, global governance remains weak relative to pressing current needs for global public policy. Some theorists try to avoid these problems through the promulgation of a Global Constitution as the basis of global governance. Going beyond the traditional Westphalian system, states should share part of their sovereignty with institutions and bodies at other territorial levels, and they must begin a major process to deepen democracy, making their organization more responsible. The main goal of the Global Constitution should be to make possible the convergence of the unsustainable development of developed countries and the unsustainable underdevelopment of the underdeveloped countries into “sustainable development.”

Some political theorists think that political globalization is coming through the triumph of Western patterns of life. Francis Fukuyama, a supporter of the Reagan doctrine during the 1980s, published in 1992 a book entitled, *The End of History and the Last Man*. He argued in it that the triumph of Western culture is complete after the struggle of ideologies during the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of Marxism. Political and economic liberalism, he stresses, is the only theory with a future. Big confrontations will no longer be possible, making possible a new era he calls the “end of history.” “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1989, 3).

A year later, the political scientist Samuel P. Huntington published an article titled, “The Clash of Civilizations” in response to Francis Fukuyama’s vision. Three years later, in 1996, he expanded this theory in the book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. The question is, once more, how to conceive a global politics after the Cold War era. Fukuyama’s answer is that human rights, liberal democracy, and a free market economy will be the pillars of the process of political globalization. Huntington, on the contrary, thinks that after the time of ideologies, only cultures and religions have the values capable of conducting the life of societies. These are, for the same reason, the true sources of social and political conflicts. Therefore, the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or economic, but cultural. “Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future” (Huntington, 1993).

One important source of conflict is religion, especially between those religions that defend the existence of an absolute truth, one only in the hands of its believers,

who have the duty of extend their message to the whole world as the only way of salvation. This is the case of Christianity, most common in Western civilization, and of Islam. Both messages and pretensions are incompatible and will lead to a violent confrontation between them. That is what Hizb ut-Tahrir has called “the Inevitability of the Clash of Civilisations.”

Others think that these predictions are completely biased, because they focus the analysis on the extreme points of view of fundamentalisms, either political or religious. Hence, the importance of promoting respect and tolerance between different cultures and religions. Some proposals have been developed in this way by religious leaders, like the declaration promoted by the Parliament of the World’s Religions on peace and global ethics in 1993; others include the Dialogue Among Civilizations promoted by the former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami, which was the basis of the declaration by the United Nations in 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and the Alliance of Civilizations proposed at the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005 by the president of the Spanish government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and co-sponsored by the Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Philosophers have made their own proposals, following, especially in Europe, the Kantian tradition of “cosmopolitanism” (Held, 1995). One of the most prominent defenders of this idea has been Jürgen Habermas, who translated the Kantian cosmopolitanism into a more pragmatic global constitutionalism (Habermas, 2008, 312–352). Human beings are living now in a “multilevel system” (with “states,” “transnational” regimes such as the European Union, and “supranational” organizations like the United Nations) that establishes “a politically constituted world society without a world government” (Habermas, 2008, 316). In this situation, public action should be based on “negative duties of a universalistic morality of justice,” legitimated by a thin “worldwide background consensus.” Habermas thinks that this ideal is expressed today, at least, in the “shared moral indignation” of people in response to “egregious human rights violations and manifest acts of aggression [that] gradually produce[s] traces of cosmopolitan solidarity” (Habermas, 2008, 344).

Need for an Ethical Globalization

Political globalization cannot become real without an established “Global Civic Culture” (Boulding, 1988) or a “Global Civil Society” (Oliveira & Tandon, 1994). On the front line of this social movement is the “third sector” (Florini, 2000), which is nonprofit but at the same time neither governmental nor religious, and then a veritable “global associational revolution,” “a massive upsurge of organized private, voluntary activity in virtually every region of the world” (Florini, 2000, 1). It tries to construct a society different from the purely economic one of the free market. In the words of the French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, “Yes to a market economy, no to a market society.” The third sector is the upsurge of a new culture

and a new set of values, beyond the economic profit, from one side, and the religious charity, from the other. And now the question is what kind of values are these?

There are, at least, two strictly different types of values, called “intrinsic” and “instrumental” (Gracia, 2011, 89–133). These are the most accessible today to human beings. The most important instrumental value by-and-large is the economic one. Money is only one instrument to achieve different things people value. In other words, money is a value-mean, not a value-end. It has no value by itself, but by the other things that can be achieved with it, which are appreciated by themselves, for instance, the beauty of a picture, or the friendship in a person. In fact, only instrumental values can be measured in monetary units; friendship or beauty are priceless.

The problem is that economic globalization has grown with the idea that economic profit is the only important value, and that priceless means worthless. This is the public opinion today, and is also prevalent in politics. “Elected representatives also frequently put their personal interests ahead of the common interest. Instead of standing for certain intrinsic values, political leaders want to be elected at all costs - and under the prevailing ideology of market fundamentalism, or untrammelled individualism, this is regarded as a natural, rational, and even perhaps desirable way for politicians to behave [. . .] The contradiction between politicians’ personal and public interests was, of course, always present, but it has been greatly aggravated by prevailing attitudes that put success as measured by money ahead of intrinsic values such as honesty” (Soros, 1998, xxvi).

Money is the measure of all instrumental values. But some values, the most important in human life, are not instrumental. They are called intrinsic, because they are valuable by themselves, like friendship, love, justice, peace, pleasure, wellbeing, solidarity, life, and health. When one of them is lost, something valuable by itself vanishes. It cannot be imagined a true human world without love, or without beauty, or any other of these values. Technical instruments, like cars, phones, or pharmaceuticals, are needed, but only for the intrinsic values they are related to. A pill is a way of curing a headache. If the pill could not improve health, it could be said that it is completely useless, or worthless. Health is an intrinsic value, and the value of drugs is only instrumental.

The duty of all human beings is always the same, to add value, that is, to promote or implement values, to increase values or to do things more valuably. Ethics deals with all kinds of values, but especially with the intrinsic ones, because they are ends by themselves, the true ends of human life.

The Long Run to Moral Globalization

Human beings have always been aware that they have moral duties not only to themselves, promoting, for instance, their perfection and happiness, but also, and perhaps primarily, to others. But what they have understood by others, from a moral point of view, has been changing through history. In ancient times, it can be imagined that the moral world of human beings was reduced to families and

relatives; at the most, to their segmentary or tribal society. Outsiders were by definition strangers, rivals, and enemies, with which the only moral duty they had was to kill them or make them slaves.

The Greek perspective was to some extent similar. Only Greeks were endowed with the *logos* or reason needed to develop a fruitful moral life. All others were “barbarians,” incapable of developing their lives as true human beings. Only in the *polis*, and not in the other minor social structures, was deliberation, the right method of moral thinking, considered possible. And in the *polis*, only some people were endowed with a true deliberative capacity, “for the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, but it is without authority, and the child has, but it is immature” (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1260 a 12-14. Aristotle 1984, 53). The consequence was that there were some people entitled to take moral decisions, the true moral agents, while the others were by nature moral patients, that is, people only capable of obedience.

The first consequence of this historical analysis is that humankind has never understood all human beings as moral agents. On the contrary, it has been thought that only a small number of people were endowed with the true moral condition. The only moral virtue of all others was obedience, that is, moral slavery. Even during the Middle Ages, this moral slavery did not disappear; it was interpreted then in theological terms. The cause of this new spiritual slavery, as discriminatory as the old one, was sin (John 8: 34f; Rom. 6: 16). Sinners were degraded to the level of slaves, and deprived of nearly all human rights, in some cases even the right to life, while grace was taken as the way of liberation from the sinners’ slavery, entering to a new one. “But you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God” (Rom 6: 22). In this new slavery, people were not endowed with the capacity of deliberating about moral things, but reduced to the role of moral patients instead of moral agents, and obliged to blind obedience.

Only in modern times was moral agency asserted as an intrinsic propriety of all rational beings. This was the origin of the so-called “principle of universalization,” coined by Kant. All human beings are by nature autonomous agents, and therefore slavery is always inhuman, either social or moral. There are two different and opposite sets in the world, the one with all rational beings and the other with all the other things. The first is called the “moral world” and the other the “natural world.” The Kantian universalization covers, therefore, human beings but not the things of nature.

From the end of the eighteenth century, the time in which Kant coined the so-called moral principle of universalization to today, many things have happened. By “all human beings” Kant could only understand the “actual” people living on earth in a certain period of time. But there was little capacity to take into account the actual situation of people all over the world in Kantian times. The Kantian world covered little more than Europe. Only during the last decades, and due to the accelerated development of telecommunication, has it been possible to know what really happens anywhere and anytime. This is the first difference between the old “universalization” and the new “globalization.” What Kant called “the kingdom of ends,” the set of human beings, covers today for the first time all

human beings actually existing on earth. People's moral decisions must take into account all of them in order to think they are right.

From Ethical Universalization to Moral Globalization

But this is not the only way in which globalization goes beyond universalization. One of the most important consequences of scientific development is the increase in one's capacity of foresight. This foresight embraces not only the future of present human beings, but also the life of all others possible, that is, future generations. Future generations are only "virtual," not actual, but mankind is now aware, perhaps for the first time in history, that there are moral duties to them, making possible its existence with a quality of life at least equal to the one people enjoy today. The problem is to determine whether these duties are perfect or imperfect, that is, duties of justice or duties of beneficence. In the first case, these virtual human beings should be entitled to human rights, and therefore included in the moral set, the set of human beings. This is what has happened lately, with the development in the theory of human rights of the so-called "rights of future generations." In the second case, if they were not entitled with rights, one's moral duties would only be imperfect, or private duties of good will and beneficence. Things are currently going in the first direction more than in the second, and therefore moral globalization is taking into account not only all actual human beings but also the virtual ones, that is, future generations. They are human beings, although right now only virtual.

Globalization, therefore, differs from universalization at least in two points. First, it covers all human beings actually existing, and second, future human generations. But it also covers non-human nature. This is also the consequence of scientific development. During the last decades of nineteenth century, ecology appeared as a new discipline. Its main idea is that living organisms are inseparable of their surroundings. A living organism alone is an abstraction without reality. This is one of the consequences of the theory of evolution, defined broadly by Darwin in 1859. Therefore, it is necessary to think of human beings in their environments, without which they are not real.

An important consequence of this new approach is that things can no longer be divided in two opposite sets, one with human beings and the other with all other things. Human beings cannot be taken alone, without their environment. And if they are ends by themselves, natural things must participate in this condition at some extent. Therefore, they are not pure means, as supposed previously. Kant said that human beings are means and *not only* ends, which means that, in addition to their condition of ends, they are also means, like all other things. If this is so, then the opposite should be also possible, that is, that natural things are at some extent ends, and *not only* means. Natural things should be included, at least partially, in the same set of human beings. They are also, in some way, ends, and therefore subject to rights. This is the origin of the so-called animal and environmental rights.

Animal and environmental rights can be justified in ways different from the Kantian one. Many thinkers do not accept the application of the category of “end by themselves” to animals and things to any extent, due to the fact that they are neither rational nor adequate subjects of morality and rights. The only thing that can be said is that they have “value.” This is another approach, more pragmatic and intuitive than the first. The more enforcing language of rights is substituted here with the language of values. Natural things are valuable only by the fact of being or existing, and living organisms more so. The simple fact of being is an intrinsic value, the value of being instead of not being, and the fact of being a living organism is another important intrinsic value. Kant said that human beings are endowed with an intrinsic value called dignity. But this is not the only one. There are many other intrinsic values, not only in human beings but also in pure natural things and living organisms. And due to the fact that these are endowed with intrinsic value, the defenders of this second approach think that human beings have the moral duty of respecting these values and promoting them as much as possible. Such duties are respective to intrinsic values inherent to these things, and then it can be said that these things are entitled to the right be respected, in order to safe their values. Another way of explaining that is saying that these non-human beings are endowed with rights that are respective to one’s duties. This is, therefore, a different form of justifying the so-called animal and environmental rights. They have rights because they are entitled with intrinsic values.

There is another way, a third, of approaching the problems raised by the new ecological ethics. If the first approach was the Kantian, and the second one the axiological, this third is strictly utilitarian. It is necessary to take into account animals and nature in moral considerations due to the negative consequences of doing the opposite. Taking care of nature is also taking care of ourselves. Both are members of the same world, with a common future (U.N. World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

A consequence of these new approaches is that the classic Kantian categorical imperative – “Act so that you can will that the maxim of your action be made the principle of a universal law” – is now inconsistent, because it must be formulated in broader terms. Hans Jonas proposed these four alternative formulations: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life”; or expressed negatively: “Act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life”; or simply: “Do not compromise the conditions for an indefinite continuation of humanity on earth”; or, again turned positive: “In your present choices, include the future wholeness of Man among the objects of your will” (Jonas, 1984, 10–11).

One problem with this wide and totalizing approach is the impossibility that human minds can take into account in their moral deliberation process things so vague and indefinite as “the permanence of genuine human life through time,” or “the indefinite continuation of humanity on earth,” etc. Edward Norton Lorenz described the “butterfly effect” in 1969, and the impossibility of forecasting non-linear phenomena or predicting the future in chaotic systems. The most astonishing example of this is the inaccuracy of weather forecasting from more than

about a week out. In the era of non-linear phenomena and the chaotic approach to reality, what does “the indefinite continuation of human life on earth” mean?

Science is a system of prevision. In fact, these new problems are the consequence of one’s better understanding of natural laws. This new capacity of foreseeing the future have many scientific and technological consequences, and also may influence in a definite way one’s moral thinking. Now it is necessary to take into account in moral judgments the foreseeable consequences of one’s actions. The problem is that natural systems are extremely complex, influenced by so many factors that human beings are incapable of taking control of all of them. Here certainty is very rare, and there is the need of working only with probabilities. This is the reason why in this field it is not possible to reach a lineal and determined conclusion, but only to choose a course of action that seems better than the others, in the balance of risks and benefits. This means that in this field the only thing that can be intended is to make wise, reasonable, or prudent decisions. A sage decision can be wrong, and time can also show that an unwise decision would have avoided many risks or harms. But the moral duty of human beings is to make wise and responsible decisions, not the avoidance of any mistakes. The opposite could be highly unwise and imprudent.

Towards a Global Ethics

The expression “global ethics” has, at least, two different meanings. In its first meaning, global ethics includes also virtual ethics and environmental or ecological ethics. This is the meaning in which the expression global ethics is frequently used. But it has another meaning. The question is whether it is possible to define some moral content that all human beings could agree upon. Anthropologists are aware of the diversity of moral norms in different cultural and religious traditions. They assume generally as a postulate the so-called “cultural relativism” also in the moral domain. Disagreement seems to be the norm in moral matters, which is why Huntington (1993) thinks that the clash between the major cultures and religions is unavoidable. Could it be possible, then, to formulate some universal moral principles? Are there some moral contents that can be called global?

The first attempt to answer to this question in a positive way came from the Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1993, immediately after Huntington’s proclamation. On 4 September 1993, the Parliament passed a “Declaration toward a Global Ethic,” in which people of very different religious backgrounds for the first time agreed on a minimum of irrevocable directives that they were already affirming in their own traditions. The promoter of the Declaration was the Catholic theologian Hans Küng, who previously, in 1990, published a book entitled *Project Weltethos*. The German expression *Weltethos* means “global ethos” and not “global ethics,” which in German would be said *Weltethik*. The difference is important, because the goal of the *Weltethos* movement is not to define specific duties or to construct an ethic, but to promote a basic attitude, a fundamental moral option that the world’s religions have in common, drawing up a minimal code of

rules of behavior everyone can accept. The idea of Küng is that the new “world society” does not need a single unified religion or ideology, but “does need some norms, values, ideals and goals to bring it together and to be binding on it” (Küng, 1991). Some statements in the book have become famous: “There will be peace on earth when there is peace among the world religions,” and “No world peace without peace among religions; no peace among religions without dialog between religions” (Küng & Kuschel, 1993).

The Declaration of 1993 was the origin of a wide international movement, organized around the *Global Ethic Foundation*, which appeared in 1995. The Parliament of World’s Religions developed the content of the Declaration in its meeting of 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa, with the document *A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*. And Pope John Paul II gave the official Catholic judgment about globalization and global ethic in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on 27 April 2001. On the other hand, the core ideas of global ethic have been applied to specific fields, like science, education, politics, and economics. Promoted by Hans Küng, in 2009 a group of people signed at the United Nations the *Manifesto Global Economic Ethic: Consequences and Challenges for Global Businesses*.

In a secularized society and in a post-metaphysical era, other ways of justifying globalization that are alternative or complementary to the religious justifications appeared immediately. The main characteristic is that they do not look for “substantial” agreements but only for “procedural” consensus. Two of the most outstanding representatives of this trend are John Rawls in America and Jürgen Habermas in Europe. The first has developed a procedural way of reaching a rational consensus between all human beings on the basic content of the idea of justice. Although this procedure is strictly secular, religious “tolerance” is an essential precondition in order to achieve the agreement (Rawls, 1971, 180–181). Therefore, this secular approach to global ethics cannot be seen as opposed to the religious one, but complementary to it.

The perspective of Habermas is similar. The procedural way of reaching a global ethic is, in this case, through the symmetrical dialogue between all the people affected by the norm or decision at stake. And, as in the previous case, one of the presuppositions of this dialogue is tolerance, especially in religious matters (Habermas, 2008, 306). A secular and post-metaphysical global ethics cannot be indifferent in religious matters, but it needs to be tolerant. Without tolerance, the communicative ideal discourse becomes impossible.

All these questions have political consequences, and thus the importance of politicians in this debate. More than 30 of them, former heads of state or government, are trying to promote universal ethical standards in national and international politics, through the *InterAction Council*. This body develops proposals for action for government leaders, national decision-makers, heads of international organizations, and influential individuals around the world. In 1997, they proposed to the U.N., as a complement to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), a *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*. At the same time, UNESCO promoted another *Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities*, proclaimed

in 1998, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the city of Valencia. Finally, the U.N. approved, on the 50th anniversary, a *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (53/144, 9 December 1998).

There is a growing amount of literature and documentation on global ethics. To collect it, UNESCO began and supports the Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs), a system of six databases with worldwide coverage.

Globalization and Bioethics

“Bioethics” is a recent movement. It appeared as such half a century ago. As Warren T. Reich has stressed, it had a “bilocated birth,” in Madison, at the University of Wisconsin with Van Rensselaer Potter, and in Washington, DC, at Georgetown University, with André Hellegers. Potter gave to the word *bioethics* an environmental and global significance, whereas Hellegers understood it more narrowly as the ethics of medicine and biomedical research. The Hellegers/Georgetown approach came to be the more widely accepted, while Potter’s idea of bioethics remained largely marginalized (Reich, 1995). In any case, it was into Potter’s tradition that the concept of “global bioethics” appeared. Eighteen years after coining the word *bioethics*, Potter (1988) introduced the term *global bioethics* as a way of unifying medical and ecological ethical issues in the one, more inclusive field (Reich, 1995, 25).

In 1971, Potter published a book entitled *Bioethics: The Bridge to the Future*. The metaphor of the bridge is important, because Potter conceived bioethics as the way of balancing new scientific facts, especially in the life sciences, with reflection about the values at stake. The goal of bioethics is to make up these two types of knowledge in a wider vision, reaching a way a new wisdom (Potter, 1971, 2). Only this new wisdom can assure, in the Potter’s view, the survival of humankind, which is why he defines also bioethics as “the science of survival” (Potter, 1971, 1).

Because bioethics was born and developed during its first decades in the United States, many people assumed that the “four bioethical principles” of the Georgetown model could be asserted as “global,” and therefore exportable to the rest of the world. But critical voices began to appear. Sociologists (Fox & Swazey, 2008) and anthropologists (Turner, 2003) denounced this attempt at globalization as disrespectful with the values of other cultures (Schroeder, 2005). “Moral pluralism and cultural difference have not been central topics of concern in the first decades of American academic bioethics [...] Bioethics has only concerned itself with issues of cultural pluralism quite recently” (Marshall & Koenig, 2004, 253).

There have been two different agencies of the United Nations interested in the promotion of dialogue between different cultures in order to make bioethics into a true global discipline. One is the World Health Organization (WHO), which in 2002 established an Ethics and Health Unit, expanded in 2003 to foster the

development of programs on ethical issues in biomedicine and science in both clinical and research setting worldwide, particularly in resource-poor nations. It is also part of the international consortium that supports the Global Forum on Bioethics, promoted by the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health of the United States.

The second large international agency engaged in the development and promotion of global bioethics is UNESCO, through its Unit on Ethics in Science and Technology, and more specifically through the International Bioethics Committee (IBC). This committee approved in 2003 a Report on the Possibility of Elaborating a Universal Instrument on Bioethics. Two years later, the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference. The aim of the Declaration is "to provide a universal framework of principles and procedures to guide States in the formulation of their legislation, policies or other instruments in the field of bioethics." The sixteen principles are declared as universal, and the procedures are related to the establishment of independent, multidisciplinary, and pluralistic ethics committees at institutional and/or local, regional, national, and international levels.

This Declaration tries to be an extension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. And, as in those days, criticism immediately appeared, due to the difficulty of determining moral principles as "universal." For some authors, this is once more the attempt to extend the Western moral tradition to other places with different cultures and values. One of the most outstanding critics has been the American bioethicist H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (2006). His libertarian thesis is that in the postmodern world a general consensus about values is impossible. (Engelhardt, 2006, 3, 6) Another strong criticism came from the British bioethicist John Harris. He questions the wisdom and utility of a declaration that neither distinguishes moral judgments from judgments about moral issues, nor provides any evidence that consensus was informed consensus (Harris, 2008).

The Declaration has had opponents and defenders. Some other authors looked for ways of articulating universal principles with cultural particularities (Finkler, 2008), using especial methodologies to solve the antinomy (Zieler, 2009), and stressing the need of deepen the way opened by the Declaration in the future (Williams, 2005).

In all these cases, "global bioethics" is understood as a set of universal or global moral principles. But there are other meanings of the expression. One is less theoretical and more operational. The question is whether bioethics has become a global field of inquiry, or, on the contrary, whether it is in a phase previous to the actual constitution of a global scientific domain. This has been the topic analyzed by Søren Holm and Bryn Williams-Jones in their paper "Global bioethics: myth or reality?" (Holm & Williams-Jones, 2006). The conclusion reached is that moral globalization is in the process of being real, but it is not yet (Borry, Schotsmans, & Dierickx, 2006). Therefore, global bioethics is still a topic in process of becoming a discipline. Bioethics is a young product of the Western culture, requiring time and dedication to become a true global body of knowledge and practices.

Concluding Remarks

Globalization is a recent phenomenon and is far from being completed. It began with the revolutionary changes in telecommunications that happened during the second half of the twentieth century and continued with the globalization of the financial and commercial markets in the beginning of the 1980s. The great economic crisis experienced by the Western world since 2007, without any precedent in the history of mankind, is generally interpreted as the consequence of the achievement of a global market, without the counterweight of an effective political and moral globalization. The ideology of profit as the main goal, or the only one, in human actions, is one of the causes, perhaps the most important, of the present disaster. There are two types of human values, some intrinsic and others instrumentals. The first are the most important in human lives, and these cannot be measured in monetary units. Ethics deals primarily with these intrinsic values, and then the importance of its culture. When, on the contrary, only the instrumental values are at stake, or when they take precedence, then what Habermas calls “strategic action” or “instrumental rationality” comes forward. That is, perhaps, what is happening at present.

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