

The Future of Global Justice in the Age of Trump

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Trump's victory poses twofold challenges to global justice agenda. Firstly, although his plan in dealing with various foreign policy issues remains unclear, one thing seems to be certain: global justice agenda is not on Trump's priority. Instead, his plan—despite its vagueness—poses new challenges which potentially undermine the already fragile efforts to combat global inequality. Secondly, Trump's victory itself signals a broader trend of emerging “shallow nationalism” in contemporary global politics. Ranging from May in the United Kingdom to Le Pen in France, it seems that nationalism—sometimes in its more extreme forms—is regaining its charm. Efforts to redraw the boundaries of community, to expel unwanted contaminants, to prioritise one's nations over others, and to reclaim the control of society from the so-called foreign interventions are increasingly dominant in global politics.

How do these challenges affect the global justice agenda? What does it take to think about equality in the midst of an increasingly fragmented and volatile world? What steps need to be taken if we still want to defend the idea of a just and equal world?

Trump never proposed a coherent vision on global justice agenda. However, his recent political decisions provide us with early indications on the United States (US)' future involvements in global justice politics. Firstly, although it remains unclear, Trump has shown an intention to reduce US involvement in global aid regimes or, at least, change

significantly its overseas aid policy. In order to protect its “national interest”, US will reallocate its resources—previously used to aid underdeveloped countries—to support its domestic needs (Quinn, 2016).

Secondly, US also adopts similar position in the realm of international cooperation. US will refrain from joining international cooperation which is considered harmful to its “national interest” and withdraws from existing agreement if necessary, regardless of its impact toward the advancement of global justice and the protection of the vulnerables. During his campaign, Trump did not only promise US withdrawal from

lack of financial support. US is currently the biggest donor in the world, representing around 24% from global aid flow in 2014 (Quinn, 2016). US’ decision to retreat from important international agreements could be followed with similar action from other countries. Hence, leaving such agreement dysfunctional even though it is crucial to preserve the life of global population. This potential crisis not only will set back various achievements made by international society. It will also aggravate existing global injustice by leaving the most vulnerable global population without support and protection.

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Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) (Barker, 2017), but also threaten to pull out US from the crucial Paris Accord which attempts to mitigate the harmful effect of global warming toward global population (The Guardian , 2016).

Thirdly, US seems to follow the right-wing populism’s nostalgia of purity. In order to establish “true” American identity, US adopts a hostile position toward those who are considered as a “foreigner”. Recent 90-days travel ban for citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries clearly reflects this hostile attitude (Calamur, 2017).

Existing global justice architecture will be badly affected by these decisions. The manoeuvres will drain vital resources from global justice efforts and spread distrust among international agreement participants. By cutting down its spending on foreign aid, US will leave various global justice initiatives in peril due to

Nevertheless, this is not the most significant impact posed by Trump’s administration. Trump’s “America First” rhetoric—which animates many of his decisions—function as a role model of “shallow nationalism” and amplify the already-widespread right-wing populism in global politics, either by encouraging people to take similar actions or by triggering them to retaliate Trump’s decisions.

Consequently, the horizon of solidarity is shrinking. Human beings are deprived of their ability to see people beyond their national boundaries as fellows. As our definition of “fellows” becomes limited, helping people outside our national boundary to overcome their daily suffering will be increasingly considered as an unimportant task. While Trump’s decision to reduce US involvement will jeopardize existing global justice agenda, Trump’s influential rhetoric threaten the very foundation of global solidarity.

How should global society react to this uncertain landscape? Although US manoeuvre clearly poses enormous threats toward existing global justice efforts, it also opens up a space of opportunity for the transformation of global justice agenda. Firstly, alternative actors, ranging from Canada, Germany, to China, could fill up the role left by US. The landscape of global justice efforts will be significantly altered as alternative actors provide the architecture with alternative resources and leadership. Secondly, the difficulty faced by existing architecture also makes the development of alternative platforms possible. The South-South Cooperation (SSC), for instance, could work as an alternative source of framework. By emphasizing the importance of mutual aid, unconditionality, and independence, SSC could offer different method of delivering assistance compared to Global-North-dominated global justice efforts which have been widely criticized due to its orientalist perspective, asymmetrical power relations, and inability to provide more than merely palliative treatments to people's suffering.

Yet, these alternatives need to be coupled with a broad support from democratic movement. At the level of society, democratic movement works to strengthen people's solidarity and combat prejudices, which hinder the development of such solidarity. Moreover, the consolidation of democratic movement will provide a strong opposition to shallow nationalism and give political elites bigger incentives to follow democratic values instead of spreading warmongering narratives. Dynamics at international society level hence could be influenced by initiatives at the society level.

In the midst of the changing landscape of global justice agenda, the mixture of initiatives at international and society level arguably could offer compelling alternatives to the increasingly unstable global justice

agenda. It is hopefully through this effort that the life of the vulnerable and marginalised could be protected.

The opinions expressed in IIS Brief do not necessarily represent the official policy of the Institute of International Studies

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