

‘Gatekeepers’ or ‘Gatecrashers’? Rethinking the Roles of International Institutions in Global Politics

Akinbode Fasakin

Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract

International politics as who gets what, when and how is now at its peak. Emerging powers are competing for a greater share of the world’s natural resources, while developed countries attempt to retain and wield greater influence in the international system. How these complexities interplay in the international system highlights conflicts of interests and many contradictions among states. These contradictions manifest at international institutions (especially the United Nations, UN, World Trade Organisation, WTO, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) arenas whose creations were a product of compromise among conflicting parties. Consequently, through these international organisations (IOs) states’ interests converge or diverge. IOs have been instrumental to the consolidation of the liberal developed states supremacy in an era described as the ‘end of history’ and perceived as platforms where structural weaknesses of weak states are exposed even though weak states still attempt to push for recognition of their agenda in a world mired in a ‘clash of civilizations’. Against this background, this article interrogates how IOs consolidate and compromise as well as define the roles, power, and limitations of sovereign states for influence or mere symbolism in international politics. For instance, the paper raises questions about why the proposed on the interests surrounding the proposed reforms of the United Nations Security Council in 2005 failed due to the interests surrounding it by some states. In addition, in 1996, the WTO panel, in a case between USA and Nicaragua, determined against the US and in favour of Nicaragua, the US blatantly refused to comply and the WTO did not challenge it. Thus, the article tries to analyse the structural imbalances in the power and influence of states in international politics through IOs. How well do international institutions legitimise powerful state’s sovereignty (gatekeepers roles) and delegitimise weak states’ sovereignty (gatecrashers roles)? The paper therefore concludes that what obtains now is international politics. For it to be global, consensus building, interest free dialogue, and not impositions as the case is at the moment, is crucial and essential for the reconciliation of the differences between and among states on the floor of many international institutions; a task which is still far to seek.

International institutions are becoming more important in maintaining world order¹

Introduction

The origin of the modern states system is fairly new. While it is traceable to the Westphalia Treaty of 1648, the Vienna Convention of 1818 serves as a remarkable period in the history of international organisations (IOs) (Thomson and Snidal, 2000: 693-694). Whereas states, according to the Westphalian treaty, were sovereign states established as territorially independent and equal entities operating under generally recognised laws, IOs remain creations of states operating sometimes outside the frameworks of states. The purposes for which IOs were established include for instance the prevention of wars (League of Nations); promotion of international peace and security (United Nations); and regulation of international trade (General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade, GATT, now World Trade Organisation, WTO since 1995). In addition, they exist to render balance of payment corrections to states (International Monetary Funds); rebuild and reconstruct war-devastated countries’ infrastructures (World Bank) among others. IOs continue to maintain a central role in the international politics and act as ‘world government’ filling global governance vacuums. Some states, however, exercise more influence on the activities of these IOs than others do. In fact, they even, by virtue of their participation, determine the survival of such organisations. For example, the League of Nations failed largely because the United States was not eventually a part of the organisation. The failure of the US senate to ratify the League of Nations’ covenant signalled the collapse of the organisation.

Since the end of the Second World War, however, IOs have not only increased in number and roles, they have acquired competitive statuses and positions, which sometimes challenge the sovereignty and authority of states. A number of IOs have acquired higher statuses and status symbols that intimidate extant states. This can be gleaned from the fact that states now need international institutions to validate their arrival in the international system. Membership of international organisation is a signature to the fact that a new states has arrived into the comity of nations. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Namibia and South Sudan as well as those whose independence predates the end of the Cold War, use membership of institutions such as the United Nations to announce their arrival unto the international system. As states become members of international institutions, they also, after acquiring these organisations’ membership, attempt to exert their power and

¹ See Robert O. Keohane, “International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?” *Foreign Policy* Issue 110, 1998.

influence over IOs' policies. The desires by states to exert influence over the policies of IOs, however, generate competition among states since the interests that are essentially national interests are bound to clash. States thus depend on their capacity and sometimes goodwill to exert their influence with respect to currying the favour of other states as well as drive these interests into global IOs' interests.

From the above, it may be seen that international politics as "who gets what, when and how" (Lasswell, 1948) is now at its peak. Developing countries and emerging powers are keen on advancing the democratisation of the prominent IOs. This aspiration has repeatedly failed to chime with the interests of the developed 'democratic' states that prefer the retention of the status quo in these organisations. This article, thus, interrogates how IOs consolidate, on the one hand, and compromise, on the other hand, the roles, power and limitations of sovereign states through their abilities to either influence or fail to do so in international politics through IOs' platforms. From the analysis of these complex relationships, the paper argues that IOs need to be more than arenas for power wielding to arenas where states build consensus, dialogue freely, and reduce imposition of some states interests on other states. The paper is in four sections. In the next section, which is the second section, the paper attempts to rethink the roles of states and IOs in global politics. The third section examines how some of the most prominent international institutions help to legitimise and delegitimise the powers and influence of states in international institutions. We demonstrate this by examining the formation, activities, and roles of some IOs in making these kinds of influence to happen. The last section concludes the paper.

States and International Organisations in Global Politics

The contemporary description of international relations as an arena for the entire interactions that exist between and among actors in the international system challenges the orthodox or traditional state-centric notion of the discipline. Put differently, international relations is not only about the relationships between and among only states, it encapsulates the various interactions, formal and informal, among actors in the international system. In this light, actors have not only increased in number, from just states to non-state actors, the roles of these actors have also been considerably redefined. This is so if the issues that enable actors to operate within the international system especially those concerning border, conflicts, and security among others are considered. With this in mind, it is less debatable that the significant changes in global politics and the transformation of its configuration are attributable to globalisation. Nevertheless, states still wield considerable influence in international relations. The fact that sovereign states determine the rights and limits of non-state actors is a testimony to this fact. It may be drawn, however, that the multiplicity of actors and their increasing roles hardly undermine the fact that states engage in contestation with one another, especially when one considers the interests that underpin states' survival in IR. While states traditionally conflict with one another over resources, and/or cooperate and collaborate for the protection and preservation of their national interests based on sovereign equality, the advancement in IR has modified contestations occur.

Essentially, therefore, traditional theorists including realists and idealists, and to some extent behaviourists, provide useful theoretical insights into why states were the actors that matter, why they will continue to be, and why they conflict, collaborate and/or interact with one another. The rationale by states to be engaged in the international system revolves around national interests. These may be vital, secondary, or general interests. Vital national interests like the protection of state's sovereignty, national security, the state's heritage; control over a state's natural resources, boundaries and nationals among others, are preserved by all states. These are interests that when violated, can cause states to go to war against an aggressor, i.e. when viewed in conventional terms. In fact, it is largely on the violation of these vital interests that states fought the First and Second World Wars and conducted the Cold War. It was also for the same reason, that the United States (US) invaded Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003 (see Fukuyama 2005). Though necessary to states, secondary and general interests are interests that states attempt to preserve but they are not in their core national interests. Although these other interests are necessary to all states, they are not sufficient for states to go to war with another state over them when they are violated. These interests include the protection of country's citizen abroad and those located in many of the international agreements, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is in the interests of many countries to respect UDHR but it is doubtful that a country will go to war with another country over the violation of the Declaration. The fact that the illegitimacy of many corrupt regimes in developing countries went unchallenged during the Cold War especially buttresses this point.

However, the end of the Cold War in 1989 saw a slight change in the way some states respond to those states that violate these general interests for example interests on human rights (Mwangi, 2008:271). General interests, which coincidentally cover previous soft political matters, have since gained currency among many actors in the international system. Consequently, it is presumed that states promote respect for these interests in the interests of their nationals whose contributions to states survival are huge. As Jessica Matthews (1979:50) argues, states are now sharing powers – including political, social and security roles at the core of sovereignty – with business, international organisations, and multitude of citizens' groups. The steady concentration of power

in the hands of states that began in 1648 with Westphalia is over. There is a diffusion of power among many actors in the international system. But the diffusion of power is not to allocate less power to the state. Rather, it increases the channels through which states can pursue their interests and attain it. While most of these actors are subsets of, and operating under, states regulations, the desire to utilise these multiple actors for the attainment of states' vital interests through the states' advocacy for secondary and general interests has intensified. Like informal state mechanisms, most of the new actors – business companies, international governmental and non-governmental organisations – operate as agents of governments while conducting their businesses. The modern role of the state is the harmonisation of these actors' activities in the promotion of such states interests.

It is within this milieu that states fashion concrete means of collaboration and cooperation. Described as foreign policy, states take advantage of the anarchical nature of the international system to promote, protect, and preserve their interests in a competitive world. This, with all intents and purposes, has not only been done through bilateral means, but also through the adoption of multilateral approaches. The formation of international institutions whose covenants, charters or modus operandi are clearly stated by its members has since the end of the First World War become an acceptable means of doing this. Studies in the area of international political economy have identified domestic politics as the driving force behind the executives' incentives to join and comply with international agreements (see Fang, 2008). States form association to protect certain interests by proponents of such associations. It can thus be safely argued that it is on this basis that many states participate in the formation and sustenance of IOs.

What is an international institution and what roles does it serve in international politics? Though scholars generally disagree on the meaning of the concept, international institution can basically be understood as a social construct (Biesteker and Weber, 1996) and not a natural creation like a state. International institutions may take broad and specific meanings. At the narrow/specific level, an international institution simply means an international organisation. On the other hand, international institution broadly signifies both international rules and international organisations (Coglianese, 2000). Conceived as international organisation, international institution is an organisation with an international character created by at least two members (i.e. states) whose features include periodic meetings, operational organs, and established mainly for the attainment of certain purposes whereas, as rules governing the international system, international institution can be likened to global governance. (Global) governance according to Young (1994:15) signifies the establishment and operation of social institutions (in the sense of rules of the game that serve to define social practices, assign roles, and guide interactions among the occupants of these roles) capable of resolving conflicts, facilitating cooperation, or, more generally, alleviating collective-action problems in a world of interdependence. Governance is “order plus intentionality” (Rosenau, 1992:5). In this regard, the concept, (international) institution has now replaced regime, which is defined as rules, norms, principles and procedures that focus expectations regarding international behaviour (Haggard and Simmons, 1987; Simmons and Martin, 2001). It is a set of rules and organisations meant to govern international behaviour. These rules and organisations, in turn, are often conceived as statements and institutions that forbid, require or permit particular kinds of actions (Ostrom, 1990:139) among the actors of the international political system.

Drawing from these broad and specific descriptions, international institutions as organisations and normative rules under which states relate on the principles of sovereign equality without much interference in the internal affairs of one another. International institutions comprising these multiple actors are also expected to run their mandates in ways that ensure that its political actions are predictable, non-arbitrary, and procedurally fair. Here, decision makers are answerable for their decisions, and that rules and limits on the exercise of power are enforced (Woods, 2001:84). Finally, powers of such institutions are not used for brandishing certain states' ambitions and imposing these parochial views on other states. However, most of the existing international institutions have grown out of states desires for an organisation that can advance their interests. In fact, rather than operate based on the principle of equality, some key international institutions have skilfully separated powerful states from weak ones. Due to the exigencies and dynamics of the international system, nevertheless, most states remain in these organisations. This was what some states have not really considered in being a member of an international institution. The United Nations – called “a dangerous place” by former U.S. representative to the UN Daniel Patrick Moynihan – seemed more a forum for scoring points in the Cold War or North-South conflicts than an instrument for problem solving and cooperation (Keohane, 1998). While states rationally decide to join them on the net benefits basis, membership is voluntary (Milner, 2005:837). The roles states, the component units of the organisation, play in the formation and activities of the organisations can be gleaned from three key perspectives including: the security of states and other actors in the international system, the financial and economic perspective and the examination of some international agenda. The next section takes a tour of these contradictions.

States and International Organisations: Complexity in Global Politics?

The purpose of this section is to examine how states have used international institutions in terms of their

formation, mandates, and activities for various reasons, especially as platforms for contestation among themselves. That is IOs are arenas for pushing forward developed states' interests while these organisations undermine the power and influence of emerging powers and/or developing countries in global politics. We begin by introducing two caveats. This, we hope, will guide the content of the section to achieve our purpose. The first is that this study does not claim to have a full understanding of all the international institutions in the international system. It must be noted that such a broad interrogation is more complex and, definitely, beyond the scope of this paper. Secondly and against the background of the above, we shall focus on a few of the most significant organisations of the world. How we arrive at the significance of international institutions, is a function of factors including: circumstances that surround the institution's formation, the institutions membership size (usually organisations with over 150 members), the institution's roles in the global politics, and the number of years these institutions have existed. It should be added also that these institutions are viewed in global political economic terms. In other words, some views speak directly to a particular organisation while some are shared. However, these organisations have huge significance for global governance.

It is against the background of the above that some IOs have been used as lenses for the examination of the roles and interests of states on IOs' arenas. IOs serve as platforms for the promotion, preservation, and sustenance of peace and security, as the case may be, in the international system while the peace and security in the world are a function of their definition by certain states. While the notion of security has been considerably re-modified, especially since the end of the Cold War, security as a protection of one's territory from armed insurrection is still a vital part of the definition of national security. It is therefore in the interest of states' security, in conventional and modern terms, that IOs such as the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation come to mind. Given its global reach, the United Nations has played more roles than any other organisation all over the world. Thus confirming the position that the linkage between IOs and state has long been recognised (Keohane, 1984). In particular, states have turned to IOs for the protection of their sovereignties and territorial integrity from insecurity and insurgencies, while their formation and continued existence have been initiated and managed by states. IOs survive on subscriptions, contributions, and participation of states in these institutions. As a result of this, IOs at all levels and areas of specificity (sub-regional, such as the ECOWAS; security related, such as the NATO, regional organisations such as the AU and EU, and global such as the UN) play greater roles in global politics. As security against external aggression and internal insurrection becomes particularly vital to states, human security for their citizens has gained currency among states. This in addition to security from armed insurrection, have been defined, promoted and protected by many international institutions as well. Thus, some international institutions have attempted to solve security problems tied to poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination and other forms of social exclusion. These different institutions thus fall under the purview of our interrogation.

As a global institution established for the promotion of international peace and security, the UN has attempted, through its organs, particularly the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat, for the preservation of these mandates. In responding to the complex and multiple global security challenges, the UN intervene in war torn areas and attempt to restore peace in conflict and crisis ridden areas. This is partly against the position of Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter that "nothing contained in this present [UN] Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the state". Agreed the UN is not supposed to intervene in the domestic affairs of states, but whose responsibility is it to protect the vulnerable in civil war ravaged areas? Consequently, the organisation's responses in order to prevent serious war casualties in response may have earned the UN some criticisms. This is not only because such intervention are selectively carried out, giving how the UN did not intervene in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, but also because while the UN can by itself intervene for humanitarian sake and not be seen as an impartial arbiter, doing it for the promotion of other states' personal interests compromises the organisation's neutrality and fairness. When states speak through the UN as though it was the UN, then there is the need to enforce the position of this article. Therefore, no matter how justified such states' intervention in the UN's shadow may be, breaching a vital part of the Charter that sets the UN mandate in motion is our entry point for examining the UN. On this basis, many have continually criticised the UN in carrying out its mandate all over the world. They have described its activities as being bias and subjective.

Gelina (2003) provides useful insights in this regard. According to him, the United States and the West after the Second World War have had a firm control of the United Nations. Through the organisation's formation, for example, the US led the victorious powers, under Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill of Great Britain, and Joseph Stalin of the defunct USSR, to endorse the Dumbarton Oaks plan, which precipitated the UN founding conference held at San Francisco and comprising fifty members in 1945. From its birth, the UN was born with four congenital defects. These include jealous preservation of political and military hegemonies resulting from the balance of power established by the war as demonstrated by the formation of the UN Security Council and its veto wielding states; the decentralisation and compartmentalisation of specific areas. Others are the exclusion of economics from the authority of the General Secretariat and the UN's main bodies; and the

lightness of the General Assembly, which is more of a theatrical stage than a deliberative or legislative body (Gelinis, 2003:127-128).

From the faulty foundation came the operations of the organisation. The UN has demonstrated its weaknesses and its subjection to the United States at the expense of other states especially the developing countries in many respects. A careful investigation of some of the organs of the organisation, as mentioned above, clearly elucidates this point. It is thus without question that the Security Council, the only organ with the executive power and authority to use force for the preservation of international peace and security, is dominated by the United States and its Western allies. Through the Security Council, the United Nations has legitimised the power and supremacy of five states, but more particularly, the influence of the United States. On the other hand, the UN has delegitimised the powers of other members by making them merely members of a large, all embracing and less significantly influential General Assembly members, where they can elaborately deliberate, make grandiose resolutions without any concrete executive powers to implement most of its resolutions. At the creation of the Security Council, which was more of the Great powers compromise than cooperation, the Allied powers were involved in serious debates on who should be involved in it, what roles each Great power should play, and how each member should use its (veto) power afterwards. The United States, Great Britain and the defunct Soviet Union, and later China to a little extent, all demonstrated conflicting interests and contradictions while creating the Council that would later become the world's security body. While the United States maintained a firm belief, that peace could only be held by the willingness to use 'overwhelming military power' by the Big Four, in addition to respect for sovereign equality of all states and the permission of smaller nations to play meaningful roles in the organisation, the Soviet Union was suspicious of the United States. According to the Soviet Union, the US conception of the equality of states, which the Soviet Union perceived as the institutionalisation of the wartime alliance, was cloaked in US supremacy and democratic trappings. Consequently, the Soviets maintained that an absolute, insoluble position on maintaining an unrestricted power of the veto is crucial for maintaining and sustaining the peace after the Second World War. Great Britain on the other hand, was more concerned with the balancing of European power against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it viewed the Security Council and the United Nations less as a new system of international relations and more as an added tool in traditional diplomacy (See Cox, 2009:94-96). It is for this reason that the US succeeded in including China after its earlier attempts to include Brazil failed while Great Britain influenced France's inclusion in the Council's veto power membership.

Over the years, however, the need to respond to the dynamics of the international system, especially to a reconfiguration of its geopolitical realities, necessitated calls for the Security Council reforms. Since Kofi Anan hinted this Security Council reform in June 2005, and many states indicated interests in being either permanent members of the UNSC, these are the G4 states comprising Brazil, Germany, Japan and India, or the Coffee Club; these are a list of other members led by Italy and comprising Canada, Argentina, South Korea among others. They all expected an expansion of the Council from its current number of 15 to about 20 while existing permanent members retain their power as veto wielding countries. Though the debate over the Council reform has simmered, subjecting decision on the reform of the Council to individual state interests ahead of the interest of humanity should primarily be seen as the politicisation of the organisation and its most important organ, the UNSC. This however has implications for the Council's ability to promote peace and security in the international system. To be sure, one can safely argue that counties that have failed to earn the permanent membership of the UNSC in spite of their economic weight; financial, military and personnel contributions to the organisation's activities may decline or reduce future commitments to the organisation when such is mostly needed. Generally, while the G4 and the Coffee Club have both fiercely rationalised their memberships of the UNSC, majority states have criticised the need for a security council comprising just a few nations determining the fate of the entire world while all others merely obey. Increasing the number of the veto wielding states, should these on-going states campaigns succeed, is therefore nothing more than exposing the UNSC once again to the arbitrariness of states as it was the case during the Cold War. Being an organ responsible for the promotion of international peace and security, the UNSC, coveted by many states, has been sidelined and its power regularly undermined by the very power countries. A classical case in point is the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States, where against the stance of the United Nations and refusal of the Security Council to approve US invasion of Iraq, the United States invaded Iraq in its own interest and jettisoned both the United Nations and the Security Council. Reports have it that the U.S. presidents used military force 212 times from 1948 to 1998 and obtained an authorisation from the Security Council only in 29 of these cases (Tago, 2005, see citation in Fang, 2008:313).

Created as the organisation's arm for all representatives of states and governments and for the day-to-day smooth running of the organisation, the General Assembly and the Secretariat respectively have become more of a mere states status symbol and theatrical stages with little or no influence. Beginning with the UN secretariat, the United States has not only shown distaste to interventionists and unwillingness to yield to American designs Secretaries-General by masterminding their removal from office, it has also displayed

preference for a less obstructive, cooperative and helpful in the promotion of the US interests' personalities as heads of the secretariat. For example, former Secretary General, Kofi Annan's intervention in the US and Iraq Gulf war was unappreciated by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. According to Time Magazine, "Albright blasted him and told him not to forget how he got his job – a blunt reference to the fact that the US had eased Annan in after despairing of working with his predecessor Boutros Ghali"¹. The General Assembly, which hosts the largest number of the United Nations membership merely rubberstamps the US decisions on the Secretary General. The US has used its monetary strength most of the time to thwart any decision that is not in its favour on the floor of the General Assembly. Instead of being a victim of the 'tyranny of the majority', which the UN General Assembly represents given the large number of Third World countries having equal votes with the other veto wielding states, the US has constantly haggled over the payment of its contributions to the organ. It is not a case of the tyranny of the majority, which is more democratic and altruistic but tyranny of the economically powerful, which is selfish, authoritative, exploitative and inconsistent.

While the United Nations is a globally renowned political (and somewhat economic) organisation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are key leading global economic institutions addressing states' economic affairs (see Milner, 2005:836). The Fund and the Bank are twain institutions that render financially related services. While they both represent an offshoot of the United Nations, they have maintained a largely independent status since inception in 1944. Being international financial institutions with headquarters at Washington, United States, their activities have been viewed in the light of liberalism, an ideology led by the United States and which has promoted free market system on weak states economic and political policies. This points to the fact that although the World Bank and IMF represent 186 countries, each is run by just a small number of economically powerful countries, comprising the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan. Woods (2001) argue that these countries choose the leadership and senior management, and so their interests dominate, despite the fact that the main borrowers from the World Bank and IMF are developing countries. By 2010, voting powers at the IMF and the World Bank had been revised to increase the voice of developing countries, notably China, Brazil, India, South Korea and Mexico. For most that believe this is a form of reform for these institutions, they miss the fact that such reforms have failed to redirect the interest of the institutions from the will of the minority. In addition, these new countries are still largely (neoliberal) western in their economic orientation and affiliated as partners to the West.

A brief overview of the institutions shows that the structural composition of these institutions boards and councils are generally flawed; tilted more towards the protection and preservation of the West's interests and skewed against the rest of the World especially the ones without weighty votes. According to Woods (2001:84-85), these flaws can be gleaned from two perspectives. First, the Board does not adequately represent all members, and it particularly fails to adequately represent the countries with the most intensive relationships with the institutions, for example the African members. Second, the representatives on the Boards of the institutions are too distant from the governments they represent and the stakeholders most affected by the work of the institutions. These can be understood when, for instance, we see how the 21 Anglophone African members of the IMF, at least 11 of which have an 'intensive care' relationship with the institution and all of which are deeply affected by its work, are represented by just one Executive Director and have a voting share of 3.26 per cent. Whereas the US, France, Great Britain, Germany and Japan as well as Saudi Arabia, Russia and China each has a representative at the board with the United States being the largest member with a quota of 37.1 billion (about \$54.2 billion) special drawing rights (SDR) and 371,743 votes (17.1 percent of the total). The United States has even greater clout over certain important decisions – like changing quotas – that are subject to special 85 percent majorities. With 17 percent of the votes, the United States is the pivotal actor on quota changes and many other IMF decisions (Bros and Hawes, 2006:80-81). In the World Bank, it is much the same way as the same group of African countries plus the Seychelles are represented by just one Executive Director and have a voting share of 4.07 per cent (Woods, 2001:85).

By 2000, the financial crises of the 1980s and early 1990s had caused the powerful industrialised members of the Fund and the Bank to impose 'forceful, far-reaching structural reforms' in developing nations' economies so as to correct the weaknesses in the domestic financial systems of these poor countries. These structural reforms were also intended to ensure economic growth and poverty alleviation. The policy options that emanated from these reforms are the conditionality and policy based lending that fall under the structural adjustment programmes (SAP), which is generally understood as the Washington Consensus. According to Williamson (1990), the Washington is both the political Washington of Congress and senior members of the administration and the technocratic Washington of the international financial institutions, the economic agencies of the U.S. government, the Federal Reserve Board, and the think tanks. The Washington Consensus generally requires governments to open up to global trade, investment, and capital. Critics have argued that the US dominated IFIs did not introduce these adjustment policies out of pure economic zeal or desire to see the other

¹ See "The Five Virtues of Kofi Annan", *Time*, 4 September, 2000. p. 14. cited in Jacques J. Gelinas, *Juggernaut Politics*.

parts of the world develop but a desire to ensure that the US and its allies control global economy and reap from their investments on these international financial institutions.

It might just be assumed that the above represents a mere historicisation of these institutions in legitimising the powers of some states ahead of others and that new trends on the floor of these institutions have made impartiality and equality of states mandatory; this is not so. In fact, contemporary global activities show that states are more ideologically divided and structurally incompatible in the interests that guide international institutions' activities now than before. How do IOs arrive at many of the agendas that prevail over states in international institutions and how are these institutions pursued all over the world? Most agendas in the world today are adopted and accepted by all the states as essential for their security, growth and development. However, the extent to which these agendas promote peace and prosperity all over the world is questionable. The most ubiquitous example is the case of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were arrived at following a number of relevant international United Nations conferences and summits including: the World Summit for Children, held at New York in 1990; the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As well as the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna in 1993; the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held at Bridgetown Barbados in 1994; and the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994. All of these conferences which precipitated the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995 (Fasakin, 2012:93) led to the Millennium Summit of 2000. While these conferences were full of promises and mind blowing, well articulated objectives, the manner the objectives were arrived at and how they have been implemented leave one to wonder the real motivation for the conception of these goals. As we noted the MDGs, arrived at, at the Millennium Summit in 2000 by about 189 states representatives, are a set of eight minimum living standards that states are expected to attain by 2015. While most developing countries are yet to attain a qualitative standard of living the strategies for the achievement of the MDGs by international institutions further demonstrate how parochial these goals are to the powerful and developed Western states and their representatives that craft the goals. This makes valid the accusation that the MDGs are not a set of goals intended for the growth and development of developing countries, but grandiose goals of the UN about minimum development level without the strategy to attain them. Rather than being a set of goals from the thoughts of developing countries who are in dire need of a rapid socio-economic and political turnaround, the final draft of the MDGs was the handiwork of Ted Gordon, a former CIA consultant. This draft that is poorly implemented in developing countries are arrived at without due consultations from developing countries of the South, which indeed also ignored the normal procedure of the UN General Assembly. Amin (2005) argues that the real meaning of the Millennium Development Goals arrived at by the UN General Assembly include: extreme privatization, aimed at opening new fields for the expansion of capital. It is a generalisation of the private appropriation of agricultural land; commercial opening within the context of maximum deregulation; equally uncontrolled opening up of capital movement; and states restriction from interfering in economic affairs¹ (Cited in Fasakin, 2012:112-113). This is not in tandem with goals that will bring about poverty eradication or improved living standards in developing countries.

It is, therefore, on this basis that we argue that these international institutions lack the democratic tenets that some powerful states make most of them to portray. According to Schumpeter (1950:269), democracy entails an "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote". James Lee Ray asserts that democracy offers the opportunity for consensus, dialoguing and compromise which makes the use of force almost irrelevant among democratic regimes. However, it must be pointed out that IOs are not in most cases adherents of these democratic procedures. Furthermore, rather than democratise, international institutions can prioritise, i.e. democracy which is supposed to be a game of number is substituted for a supposed superior opinion, since it is the opinion of the powerful state. When democratic states dialogue and debate on issues of general concern on the floors of international organisations, the opinions of the most powerful states prevail. By the same token, many institutions have shown little interest in deliberation and power of the majority to make decisions that will affect an overwhelming majority, instead, they have subjected all weak states to a well-crafted new world order by virtue of their membership of these international institutions. As Miliband (1992:111) illustrates this point using enormous examples, (international) institutions operate in the New World Order and the

unanswered question is whether these procedures make possible a radical challenge to the existing system of power and privilege. We know from experience that a good many such attempts, in various parts of the world, have been cut short by conservative forces who found that democratic procedures had become too dangerous to be allowed to proceed. These conservative forces everywhere in the world have been greatly helped and encouraged by both liberal and conservative leaders in the United States: recall the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran in 1953, of Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, of

¹ Samir Amin "The Millennium Development Goals: A View from the South", *Monthly Review* Vol.57 Issue 10, March 2005.

João Goulart in Brazil in 1964, of Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic in 1965, of George Papandreou in Greece in 1967, of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, and so on... This is class politics from above carried out in an international context, and it remains a crucial aspect of the so-called New World Order.

Against the background of the above, as democratic systems and free market mechanisms were key characteristics of most developed countries and used in for these international institutions when it is conducive for powerful states, several developing countries have yearned for a reform of these institutions and respect of international regulations that meet the requirements of satisfying the interests of all or at least the majority. It is hoped that if these reforms are considered, international institutions might become useful in facilitating the emergence of developing countries economic growth and political development.

Conclusion

According to neorealists, the distribution of relative gains of cooperation, matter (Waltz, 1979:105; Waltz, 2000:39) for states participation in any international institution. This is because states shy away from cooperation, if it strengthens their partners more than themselves (Maier-Rigaud, 2008:4). Three realists, Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, argue this point strongly. In Morgenthau, “there is no such thing as the policy of an organization, international and domestic, apart from the policy of its most influential member or members” (Morgenthau, 1953:150). Waltz on the other hand avers that international organisations are an important tool for powerful states to serve what they perceive to be their interests (Waltz, 2000:20), while Mearsheimer contends that “realists also recognize that states sometimes operate through institutions. However, they believe that those rules reflect state calculations of self-interest based primarily on the international distribution of power. The most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power or even increase it” (Mearsheimer, 1995:13). For these reasons international institutions have continued to remain relevant in the international system. But for how long will weak states remain loyal to the games powerful states play through international institution that put weak states at the mercy of the strong states? Only time can tell.

Bibliography

- Amin, S. (2005), “The Millennium Development Goals: A View from the South”, *Monthly Review* Vol.57 Issue 10, March.
- Biersteker, T. and Weber, C. (Eds) (1996), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Coglianesi, C. (2000), “Globalization and the Design of International Institutions” Nye Jr., J. S. and Donahue, J. D. (Eds), *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Brookings Institution Press, 2000).
- Cox, B. (2009) “United Nations Security Council Reform: Collected Proposals and Possible Consequences”, *South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business*: Vol. 6, Issue 1, Article 4.
- Fang, S. (2008), “The Informational Role of International Institutions and Domestic Politics” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, No. 2, April.
- Fang, S. (2008), “The Informational Role of International Institutions and Domestic Politics” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, No. 2, April.
- Fasakin, A. (2012), “NGOs and the United Nations Poverty Eradication Initiative in Nigeria”, *Unpublished MSc Thesis*, Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992), *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press.
- Gelinas, J. B. (2003), *Juggernaut Politics: Understanding Predatory Globalisation*, London and New York: Zed Books.
- Huntington, S. (1995), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Keohane, “International institutions: Can interdependence work?” *Foreign Policy* Issue 110, Spring.
- Keohane, R. O. (1984), *After Hegemony*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kharas, H. (2010). The New Global Middle Class: A Cross-over from West to East. In C. Li (Ed.), *China’s Emerging Middle Class: Beyond Economic Transformation*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1958), *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How*, New York: Meridian.
- Maier-Rigaud, R. (2008), “International Organizations as Corporate Actors: Agency and Emergence in Theories of International Relations” *Preprints of the Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods*, February.
- Mathews, J. T. (1997), “Power Shift”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 1.
- Mearsheimer, John J. (1995), “The False Promise of International Institutions”, *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3.

- Miliband, R. (1992) "Fukuyama and the Socialist Alternative" *Being Comments made at a Symposium to Mark Joseph Schumpeter's Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Washington D. C. April 3.
- Milner, H. V. (2005), "Globalization, Development, and International Institutions: Normative and Positive Perspectives", *Review Essays, Vol. 3. No. 4*, December.
- Morgenthau, H. J. (1953), "Political limitations of the United Nations", Lipsky, G. A. (Ed.), *Law and Politics in the World Community*, Essays on Hans Kelsen's Pure Theory and Related
- Mpoyi, R. T. (2012) "The Impact of the "BRIC Thesis" and the Rise of Emerging Economies on Global Competitive Advantage: Will There Be a Shift from West to East?" *Journal of Applied Business and Economics vol. 13, No 3*.
- Mwangi, O. G. (2008), "Political corruption, party financing and democracy in Kenya", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 46, Issue 2. Pp. 267-285.
- Problems in International Law, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Rosenau, J. N. (1992), "Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics", In: Rosenau, J. N. and Ernst-Otto, C. (Eds), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schumpeter, J. (1950), *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (3rd Edition) New York:
- Simmons, B. A. and Martin, L. L. (2001), "International Organizations and Institutions" In: Carlnaes, W., Kisse, T. and Simmons, B. (Eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, Sage Publishers.
- Tago, A. (2005), "Determinants of Multilateralism in US Use of Force: States of Economy, Election Cycle, and Divided Government." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 42, No. 5.
- Tandon, Y. (1998), "Globalisation and Africa's Options", *Newsletter African Association of Political Science Newsletter*, New Series Vol. 3. No. 1, January-April.
- Taraku, S. (2013), "Are "Civilizations" in Collision?" Available on http://www.donika.com/sylosays/clash_of_civilizations.htm accessed 12/03/2013.
- Thompson, A. and Snidal, D. (2000) "International Organisation" in: Bouckaert, B. and De Geest, G. (Eds) *Encyclopedia of Law and Economics* Available on <http://encyclo.findlaw.com/9800.pdf> pp. 692-722.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, London: McGraw-Hill.
- Waltz, K. N. (2000), "Structural Realism after the Cold War", *International Security* Vol. 25 No. 1.
- Williamson, J. (1990), "What Washington Means by Policy Reform," in: Williamson J. (Ed.) *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?*, Washington: Institute for International Economics.
- Wilson, D., Kelston, A., and Ahmed, S. (2010), "Is This the 'BRICs Decade'?", *BRICs Monthly*, 10 (3), May 20.
- Woods, N. (2001) Making The IMF and the World Bank More Accountable, *International Affairs*, Vol. 77. No. 1.
- Young, O. R. (1994), *International Governance: Protecting the Environment in a Stateless Society*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.