FROM GLOBALISATION TO EXCLUSION: POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND THE UK CHURCHES
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Abstract

This document debates from a grassroots perspective the issues of globalisation and exclusion within the nation state and international sphere by politicians and experts. The document takes a critical personal view from first hand experience on the issues of poverty and exclusion and takes on the challenge from a grassroots perspective on the issues of the re-organisation of the nation state to a competitive state, by seeking to examine the role of the political and economic policies from the national and international sphere. The document also engages a critical view from personal experiences of the impact of specific policies such as the role of JSA and the exclusion Unit and seeks to examine the role of the church in this restructuring of the nation state. The document examines the role of the church nationally and locally and questions the political, moral and ethical motivations of the church. Above all the document questions the validity of the concept of globalisation, seeking to engage and combat the silence of the intelligentsia suggesting that alternative change is possible through alliances that will give way to a more just society.

Quote
Solidarity means the economy should foster empathy among people and mutual respect and caring, rather than attitude that you are my enemy or, in any event, that I don't care about your well being. (Financial Crimes: 2000:11)

INTRODUCTION

Four years ago I experienced long-term unemployment not just over a period of one year but also over four - years. My wife Justine and our three children have faced the full force of unemployment, exclusion and homelessness. A period of this time was spent living in the south coast town of Worthing.

"which has been named the most profitable town in Britain for the third time, by management Consultants, Exsperian who surveyed more than 430 towns and cities across Britain. Council bosses said the headlines masked the regeneration and deprivation problems in the town which government funding would help to tackle. Council head of economic development said. results show Worthing businesses are performing well and this can be only good news for the town, however it is important to all those looking at this survey recognise there are economic and social problems in the town which are perhaps a masked by a perception that profitability equates prosperity".

(Worthing Guardian: 2001)

In Sussex Coping with the effects of exclusion and poverty became a huge burden on us. In fact, my family has been made homeless twice, while I was unemployed. This is the most frightening experience to happen to anyone in this, or any other nation - particularly those who are the most vulnerable - To be forced, through economics and politics, to leave one's home, whether it is a privately rented dingy flat, or one's own house - the fear, and helplessness with very young children is something you never forget.
At all times we portrayed a positive attitude to our children to give them a sense of being and worth. The pressures on my wife were enormous and still are. Today, my family and I, with little help from society are trying to carve a path to a more optimistic future. I am a student at The University of Sussex majoring in International relations. Reading at present International Political Economy with Cultural Studies in the School of African and Asian studies.

My wife and I have faced and experienced all the pain and suffering unemployment, homelessness exclusion and poverty can give; yet we still smile and try to forge a better future for our children and ourselves. We; like so many in this nation are nurturing tomorrow's children who, in turn, are the next generation to bring about a better world. There should be no limits of political, economic, social and spiritual investment in the peoples of this nation, and put this thinking of no limits of investment to the top of all agenda's and areas of policy. By giving today will help all in the future. Yet sadly, I feel and see naked individualism through economic and political policies across the board fragmenting the world we live in, giving rise to the number of those excluded and poor where isolation, tension and fear become the dominant factor in life.

This brings to the forefront the question of politics, economics and the church and how we got where we are?

Politics, Economics & the Church how we got where we are.

From personal experience and from a grassroots perspective there is a silence, a silence of truth and a lack of will and belief and real understanding by the leaders of today's so called democratic society in defending the excluded and poor on a local, national and global level. They do not appear or want to understand the real needs of those on the margins of society, or those who struggle to live up to the image of a global society. The reasons being, due to the climate of global political economic policies that shape our lives, by those politicians, economists, experts and religious sectors who have abandoned the moral and ethical high ground, raising their hands in surrender to a lesser more passive field of contentment, being the freedom of the market. This brings to the debate the role of politics and policies within the concept of globalisation.

Concepts of Globalisation within British Political Policies.

The concept of globalisation within the field of international political economy, according to P Hirst, Grahame Thompson is that globalisation is the development of a new economic structure. The writer M Waters, states that Giddens refers to the concept of globalisation as, global networks of relationships (M Waters: 1995:50) that emerges as the modern world system of capitalism (M Waters: 1995:50). Probing this area it is possible to see a direction of integration of economic and political networks, by states and other organisations. Interestingly R Tooze states that the essence of a global economy is made up of firms and other entities that operate trans nationally over the whole globe (R Tooze: 1999:221). Again M Water’s paper on Giddens states that globalisation thus can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities (M Waters: 1995:50). It is here that the role of Trans national companies need to be exposed

Super trans national Companies and the state

Super Tran national Companies operate through a complex web of distribution and production across borders of nations and operate within the international sphere, or even on a global scale, through this complex web of production distribution. They are able to penetrate the borders of nations or even dissolve the notion of sovereignty and can be said by globalists that we are
seeing a disintegration of the nation state, by the penetration of international market forces upon
the nation state which, in turn, forces change upon the policies of the domestic market and is
viewed as unstoppable by politicians. The perception given is that it is an outside force bearing
down on the state. Super TNCs, and Multi National Companies have the ability to have branches
of the parent company in many countries through, ¡®separately incorporated subsidiaries or
associates with large minority share holders¡¯ Peter Willetts: 1999:292: The problem they pose is
within the role of trade and prices and the evasion of tax and domestic political, economic policies
of the nation state. The Super TnCs, have the ability to move assets, capital and production
around the globe at will. This process has an enormous effect on the thinking within the political
environment. Hurst and Thompson state that the word "globalisation" and the concepts have
¡®Paralysed radical reforming of national political and economical strategies¡¯ (P Hurst: 1999:1)
and so this has given way to a view that anything that challenges the ¡®international markets
from a national stand point is unfeasible ¡¯(P Hurst: 1999:2). So are nation states and the political
economical and social spheres stagnant or is there a policy of inertia brought about by the few in
positions of power? Again it can be said that the ¡®economic ideology that fires the concepts of
globalisation keep the political and social spheres of globalisation alive¡¯. ¡¯(P Hurst: 1999:2.)
Here the role of the state comes into play within the concept of globalisation.

The state and concept of globalisation.

The state within the concept of globalisation and the global political economy can be seen as the
¡®internationalisation of the state¡¯ (R Palan: 2000:139). The borders of the state are seen as
blurring within the international sphere. In this respect economic markets and political global
forces penetrate the sovereignty of the state. Neo Liberal thought embedded within the political
domain disciplines change upon the political, social and economical systems of the state. In real
terms what is implicitly being achieved is political manipulation of domestic policies to promote
deregulation of domestic markets, the push for free market enterprise, and welfare reform. Indeed
when examining further on this issue, what is being achieved is a restructuring to a competitive
state. In effect the ¡®transformation from advanced industrial state, a national industrial and
welfare state into a competition state¡¯ (P Cerny: 2000:117). Here within the areas of
restructuring to a competitive state, the dynamic of exclusion is occurring as a ¡®reinvention of
political structures and institutions are imposed, to a wider global context¡¯ (P Cerny: 121:2000).
Other structures are then deconstructed within the concept of globalisation, as economic and
political reformulation of interdependence on a global scale, which acts as a disciplinary force.
Cerny describes, that in effect globalisation in the social, political and economic institutions
emerges in economic terminology in ¡®multi equilibrium points¡¯ (P Cerny: 121:2000). By this
process once ¡®social relations are established, power structures lock in and states act as
stabiliser to this concept¡¯ (P Cerny: 121:2000) thus reinforcing this whole process. Here
globalisation can been seen in this context at the domestic level, the ¡®market bursting free from
the bonds of national societies¡¯ (R Cox: 1995:39). What is made transparent within the concept
of globalisation is the deepening of integration of the international and domestic, social, economic
and political spheres of human life within the concept of the globe and the state. Interestingly R
Cox states that ¡®Polanyi saw the disintegration of pre existing social bonds and alienation¡¯ (R
Cox: 1995:39). Here lies implicitly an important aspect to the concept of globalisation and the role
of social society and social bonds within societies and individuals and it is the role of exclusion.

From a Grassroots position, life experience shows this is true. For instance such policies include
the transformation of employment rights, the flexible job market, which in turn has affected
collective thinking and the role of union power, which has been eroded by the shift of
Governmental political support to a program of laizze-faire, as the national economic and political
sphere of decision making has been hollowed out and disembedded from the state. The role of
the UK nation state government today can be seen as governance and maintenance of a
perceived global system . This can been seen in the process of welfare reform polices such as
the introduction of the Job seekers allowance and welfare to work programmes, which use disciplinary and coercion tactics to force people into specific forms of work and training. A policy which seems to have been imported from American right wing political practice.

Again a dismantling and re-routing of welfare benefits from unemployment to in work benefits is occurring, such as the new Working Families Tax Credit, that is given in one hand but taken out of the other, due to the fact that as soon as you are in work the tax credit brings you just above the right to claim full housing and council tax benefit if you are in rented accommodation. So, you can end up still no better off due to having to take on these extra costs. This to poses problems for those with mortgages. This tax credit reinforces low wages. A low waged economy is seen to be attractive to Multinational Companies. there is a silence, a silence of truth and a lack of will and belief and real understanding by the leaders of today's so called democratic society in defending the excluded and poor on a local, national and global level. They do not appear to understand the real needs of those on the margins of society, or those who struggle to live up to the image of a global society. The reasons being, due to the climate of global political economic policies that shape our lives, by those politicians, economists, experts and religious sectors who have abandoned the moral and ethical high ground, raising their hands in surrender to a lesser more passive field of contentment, being the freedom of the market. I am told the most important actor in life today is the economic market. The domination of the performance of stock markets, expert management consultants and firms, who seem to dictate how wonderful life is for us all, in this global economy. Experts and business rules with politicians running behind who see politics more as a career move than a fight for truth and justice for all. Many politicians again have other interests, mostly in the business sector.

If life is so wonderful why do I see those who work worn out and tired, stressed and no time for their children or partners? My wife and I have struggled for years and carry on struggling with three children. We survive on a student loan, which is less than I would get on J.S.A. Why, then, am I as a student having to consider possibly leaving University because we cannot really afford to live on roughly £6,500 p.a. in the South of England where the cost of living seems to ever increase. Who calculated these loans, do they live with three children? In the real world, or just their real world. Do politicians have any influence anymore as they follow Neo Liberal thought? Why do I see money being pumped into the private zones of life to share holders, billions made in profits, yet in my street we are still waiting after two months for a street lamp to be turned on. Schools in Sussex have stopped hot meals due to budget cuts, yet I see large amounts of money spent on advertising local government, social regeneration grants of millions being directed mainly to the business sectors, also local politicians in hand with business to form economic forums for control and distribution of resources. This too I see at the national and international level. For instance the Dome, this money could have been put to good use in other social programmes. I feel that we local people have no control over events, and decision-making processes. Again the role of JSA policies or welfare to work programs give way to benefits which are far to low and well below European levels, and are only linked to part of the economy forcing people into low paid part time work, short-term contracts by transferring benefits to in-work programs and reducing the welfare state. This is causing deep suffering to those in need. Yet it is all right for a politician to earn over £40,000+ and directors to earn over £100'000 and much more.

The Free market is not free but controlled by the few for the few who have the political and economic power. This is now a problem as all major political parties seem to be afraid to break out and seek a more social society as they believe that nothing can be done and the free market will respond to the needs of society. We are entering a time when no one can truly predict what is what anymore.

One situation in my local area can be seen in the car company Daewoo as it laid off over 600
workers, and delayed payment of wages for months, then requested 50% pay cuts to existing staff, to make the company attractive to sell by reducing wage costs. Again this problem arose due the fact that the trans national company 'Daewoo', one time 14 largest company in the world, in its own country has financial difficulties. This is the Cost of The Global Political Economy on the local individual. What is amazing is that little could be done by politicians. What I would like to know is how much has this cost the region on sweeteners, to bring this company over to the UK and tax concessions, on profit and the cost of the company pulling out of the region? This I feel is where political economics at the local level locks out people. This is achieved by, as mentioned before, the privatisation of all aspects of life, even perceived social life, by the policies of deregulation of the workplace, flexible workforces and short-term contracts. For example, the divide and rule policies, such as those who work and those who are made redundant see each other as independent groups within a society. Local people see themselves isolated and on the outside of the concept of globalisation by the exclusion of collective identity caused by the process of individualism being seen as freedom. This brings to the forefront the word exclusion.

DEFINTION OF EXCLUSION

Exclusion is known in the discourse of the social aspect of societies and is termed [social] exclusion, which enters all factions of global society. Within this context, exclusion is the "rupture of the social bonds" (H. Silver: 1996:1) of a group of people from their particular society. The word exclusion, within politics stems from France and was used by René Lenoir, the French Minister for Social Action in 1974 (A. Cameron: 2000:36), who referred in a speech to 'Les exclus' (A. Cameron: 36.2000) The concept of exclusion in France, 'rupture of the social bonds' (H Silver: 1996:1) is its official definition. Hilary Silver states that 'Exclusion implies isolation and deficiency of social solidarity' (H Silver: 1996:2). Exclusion therefore can be observed in the political, economic and social domain of societies of the globe. Exclusion exists within the philosophical thinking of humans.

Exclusion can be perceived as the 'rupture' (H Silver: 2000:1) of the connection of bonds in the mental, physical and spiritual world of humans. In this respect, exclusion can be viewed as a central dynamic that exists within and outside the concept of globalisation. With reference to the above, the discourse of social exclusion is focused on the issues of poverty or those socially disadvantaged from mainstream society. Hilary Silver points out that in fact exclusion can be 'multi dimensional' (H Silver: 2000:2) and so reinstates that exclusion can exist in the paradigm of globalisation, and if so, reinforces that the dynamic of exclusion is in fact a paradoxical concept of globalisation. The dominant philosophical thinking being neo liberalism is a process of exclusion.

Examining a report by local people experiencing poverty, exclusion and marginalization shows that in:

'1979 some 5 million or 9% of the UK population lived on incomes below half the average and by 1997 this had increase to 14 million, 25% of the population and that when looking at the position of children living below half the average from 1979 at 10% to 33% in 1992/3 or 1 in 3. (Local people National voice: 7:1996). What can be observed in the statistics is the reduction of economic, political and social structures in the United Kingdom. Increases in numbers of people in poverty show a slow polarisation of exclusion occurring.

Examine Exclusion by Globalisation:

'Three fifths or 4.4 billion people in developing countries lack sanitation; one third have no clean water; one fifth have insufficient food. Member of the organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development - the world richest countries, 100 million people have less than 50% of the OECD median; 37 million without jobs and more than 100 million are homeless. 20% of the
worlds population living in the richest counties account for 86% of private consumption expenditure and the poorest 20% account for only 1.3% and in 1960 20% of the worlds population in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20%. By 1995 this was eighty two times’ (Kevan Blundell: 1999:11)

Here the exclusion in all arrears of life is clearly seen as a construct of globalisation and the role of political economic polices combined with business. Also within these statistics what can be seen is a hegemonic system of integration operating in the real world through the emergence of global actors, such as non governmental international organisations and regimes, which have integrated the areas of production and service economy and the expansion of money capital. Networks are formed across the globe through International organisations, Non Governmental Organisations, such as the Paris Club, International Organisations being the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, inter-governmental organisations such as United Nations, and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. But what is needed to be viewed is the power base within these organisations and voting structures, for instance when examining the specific area it is worth noting the role of regimes.

Regimes can be said to be a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, and decision making procedures around which actors expectations converge in a given area of international relations (S Krasner: 1999:235). In effect formal or informal agreements within international organisations. This brings to the forefront the role of the World Bank and the role of structural adjustment programmes that affect the nations of the developing world. Who has input into the decision making process and the impact of Saps on the social policies, such as the restructuring of domestic policies, this being welfare, free education, free medical care, social housing.

A W Tom Clausen president of the World Bank in 1981-86 stressed the role of the private sector in development. Conditionality to policies played a role. He steered the bank away from poverty alleviation to free markets enterprise and economic growth.

Quotes from an Oxfam poverty report sites local people and the effects of ESAP (Enhanced Structural Adjustment program):

Quote 1

“He has meant that we can only eat two meals a day. We cannot afford to eat meat, because prices are too high. Everything costs more. I cannot afford the school fees for my son or daughter since they started charging. The Government said it was because of ESAP. We can’t even go to the clinic when the children are sick because we can’t afford it.

Woman, Harare, Zimbabwe

Quote. 2

“In the old days we provided soup for a few hundred people. Then in 1990 we had stabilization, prices went up by 2000%. Look around you at the children hawking on the streets when they should be back at school. Look at the numbers of people we are feeding; look at the numbers that sleep on the streets; look at the conditions in our slums. Has stabilisation made things better?”

Quote 3

Soup Kitchen Worker, Lima, Peru.
Costs of adjustment have caused
Cut in public expenditure

Controls on credit creation

Reduced subsidies

Lowering of public sector wages. Stabilisation causes, massive social costs. Reduction in food
subsidies, and decline in wages reduces household incomes.

Oxfam state increasing unemployment, decline in real wages reduced social welfare provision is
almost a universal feature of structural adjustment.

It is worth noting an essay by Clair Short Minster for Department for International Development 16
August 1999. Concluded her support for globalisation but also stated There is no

¡®guarantee that economic interdependency will lift the world’s poorest out of poverty. Greater
economic integration also brings risks. Instability and the risk of the gap between the rich and
poor, within and between countries, will grow wider, with a large part of the world’s population
excluded from the benefits of economic progress¡”.

It is clear to see that not only does exclusion exist but a system of control governance and
maintenance of a system from an international hegemonic sphere exists for the few and this
reflects upon the national sphere. Within the UK this was started by a conservative party and is
now carried on by the new labour party and viewed by all political parties as the way forward
by the role of private ownership. But what of the church and where is the church within this process.

The Church And Where Are We

I feel that the church is fractured and in need of self repair not by looking inwards on itself but by
taking the moral and ethical high ground and begin to reformulate itself by stepping fully into the
political economic and social spectrum. It needs to try to live up to what it preaches in its ancient
texts, fighting for justice in society than rather entwining itself in the trappings of the Neo liberal
world. The church has been involved through the Faith in the City report, which helped to define
poverty, and led to establishing the Church Urban Fund. CUF has helped local communities to
begin to tackle poverty, but a larger step into the political sphere on the issues of economic,
social policy and welfare is needed. Why is it, where I live on a deprived but fairly new social
housing estate, with about 50 families and mostly single parents with 3 children or more, making
a total 150 children, we are all poor? There is little for them to do. Yet just over the road is a
church and every Sunday all the Volvo cars turn up with families going to church, and next door a
Catholic church were all the Volvos and BMW cars turn, up. A very middle class event. I have yet
to see a member of those churches visit our housing estate, which has a bad reputation, for
Drugs-violence etc combined with the pressures of crammed 'dumping grounds' for those that are
economically poor. We even have a wire fence round us and a police station, which is at the only
access point in or out of our small estate.

Has the church become too middle class? What would Jesus say of the church today? Unify and
seek alliances with the people not the House of Lords, countryside estates, big houses, forget the
money, be with the people as the people will make you richer. You do not need a church to pray. I
visit a friend of mine who is a local vicar he has a four-bedroom house in the country and a new
kitchen, also a space cruiser and another car. His church is full of just the ‘right sort’ of people. Not the ‘wrong sort’.

I question myself and wonder what has happened to the church whose side are they on, or are they the same as the political parties on the side of nothing but themselves and the Neo liberal system?

I and others at great cost to ourselves and families spoke at the first ever United Kingdom National Poverty Hearing in Westminster, London, in front of the nations leaders and decision makers. This event was unique, as it was the first time a multi faith national conference on poverty, had come together on the issues of the well being of the poor of the nation and to challenge our leaders and the economics and political foundations of the nation, but above all it was an event that challenged society to come together and think of what changes can be achieved. We need more of these events to stir the nation. Again we had input into ‘The Future of Work Report’.

I still believe that these were the fundamental elements that changed the perception of the nation and its thinking and won the Labour party the election. As we who are the hidden spoke out, and all in the nation saw the issues of exclusion, poverty, marginalisation, the hidden truths and above all people, just like themselves suffering. Yet as we all bathed in successes, such as the formulation of the ‘Social Exclusion Unit’ and the media attention on the Churches Enquiry into the Future of Work. Those excluded and in poverty were rarely asked to comment on the successes. We were sidelined. I wrote to the exclusion Unit about a Southeast poverty forum and would they be interested in attending? I received a reply saying, unfortunately no. It seems again that those in power and decision-making roles sidelined the people they are talking about. Instead they take the knowledge and redefine it in their words for their own use, often against us.

It is interesting to highlight the importance of community exchange projects, such as the one that was implemented by a group of local people from Thornaby on Tees, where they worked with other agencies within the UK and SamaSama Enterprise project in the Philippines where people suffering poverty in each country had the chance to exchange and view each others lives by visiting each others communities.

Again it is worth noting that individuals from both nations found many similarities within the area of poverty and exclusion, in the Philippines it was more explicit but within the UK it is hidden but still the same except that the UK suffers a psychological poverty of isolation. More of this type of work is needed to build alliances in the north and south between those who are poor. Again it is worth noting what the Columban Fathers and Sisters did in the mid-late 1980’s. They brought some of their missionaries back from overseas on return mission to the United Kingdom because they believed that we were beginning to witness similar problems to those in developing countries. Here Columban Missionaries have brought back and started using models and skills that they have learned in developing countries on combating poverty. Oxfam, is also going down a similar path. So what is happening to this the 4th richest nation in the world.

I say to the Churches, which have deeper roots within society than politicians, please start to seek alliances with the silent intelligentsia, who dare not speak out, new social movements, communities and the excluded and begin to repair yourselves to act as a force for real change, for a more social, moral and ethical nation and world. As I said at the national poverty hearing in 1996, we in this nation who are poor, excluded, unwaged, low-waged, face a battle of visibility and we need to be seen. The churches can play a major role in helping us achieve that visibility.
Bibliography


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