



BETWEEN STABILITY AND CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL ORDER

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Abstract : The concept of global order has been a recurring theme of analysis and debate in academia and civil society. This paper proposes a comparative analysis of the contributions of two reference writers regarding the concept of global order. By approaching the works of Henry Kissinger and Immanuel Wallerstein, the authors investigate how Kissinger and Wallerstein perceive and conceive the dynamics and evolution of global order. The research methodology is based on the comparative analysis of the writings of Kissinger and Wallerstein, with an emphasis on theories of realism and their implications for national security and the nation-state. Through this comparative approach, the authors of the article propose to highlight the convergences between the two viewpoints, allowing for a broader understanding of the perspective on the concept of global order. This article aims not only to retrospectively analyse the thinking of Kissinger and Wallerstein but also to formulate some perspectives on the imperious ability of the global order. Thus, the authors of the article may provide an answer to key concerns regarding the viability and sustainability of the current global order, the exploration of reforms, and adaptation to new global realities. This approach contributes to the academic debate and aids the formulation of relevant conclusions concerning possible developments and necessary adjustments within the existent global order

Key words : Global order, Kissinger, security, state, Wallerstein.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the concept of world order has attracted significant interest among researchers and theorists in the fields of international relations, global politics, and the world economy. This fascination is largely due to the complexity and continuous dynamics of interactions between states, international organizations, transnational corporations, and other non-state entities that together shape the structure and processes of the international system. In this context, understanding how world order is configured and maintained becomes essential for anticipating and managing global challenges, ranging from international conflicts and economic crises to climate change and pandemics.

Through this paper, the authors aim to explore the concept of world order and conduct a comparative analysis of the approaches offered by two of the most influential theorists of the twentieth century: Henry Kissinger and Immanuel Wallerstein. Although both authors have substantially contributed to the specialized literature on this topic, they offer profoundly different perspectives on how world order is structured and the mechanisms through which it can be maintained or transformed. By examining Kissinger's works, which emphasize the importance of the balance of power and diplomacy among sovereign states, and Wallerstein's

world-systems theory, which critiques the structural inequalities generated by global capitalism, this article aims to provide a nuanced understanding of contemporary world order and the forces that shape it.

2. PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT OF WORLD ORDER

The concept of world order refers to how states and other international actors interact with each other, the power structure and norms that govern these interactions, and the overall system of regulating international relations [1]. It involves a set of principles, rules, and institutions designed to ensure stability, security, and a certain level of predictability in relations among nations, aiming to minimize conflict and promote global cooperation [1].

2.1 *Evolution of the Concept*

The historical presentation of the concept of world order has been the subject of other more extensive works, thus a comprehensive presentation here would be redundant. Therefore, we will focus on those particularly important moments in the evolution of the concept of world order.

The conception of world order truly began to crystallize in the sixteenth century, marking the

formation of the system of Great Powers in Europe. The principles governing international relations were later shaped by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which established the concept of sovereignty and laid the foundations of the modern international system [2]. The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War in Europe, is often considered a defining moment in the formation of the system of sovereign states, establishing the principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention [3]. These principles became the foundation of the international order and have profoundly influenced the way states interact to this day.

In the subsequent period, various geopolitical transformations, including the rise and fall of empires and technological changes, strongly influenced the structure of global power. In particular, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars brought significant changes, introducing new principles in foreign policy, such as the balance of power and the prioritization of national interests [4].

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the concept of world order evolved alongside geopolitical, technological, and economic changes. The history of the concept of world order has its origins shortly after World War I, when American President Woodrow Wilson promoted the idea of a „new world order” through the creation of the League of Nations, aimed at ensuring international peace and security. The creation of the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations, represented attempts to institutionalize international cooperation and prevent large-scale conflicts through dialogue and multilateral negotiations.

The Cold War introduced a new dimension to the concept of world order, characterized by the bipolarity of power divided between the Western bloc, led by the United States, and the Eastern bloc, led by the Soviet Union (a characteristic of realism). This period was marked by constant tension and competition for global influence (the struggle for hegemony, characteristic of realism), largely managed through the balance of „nuclear terror” (a variant of the balance of power, characteristic of realism) and deterrence policies [5].

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s marked the beginning of a new era in world politics, often characterized by the unipolarity of US power [6]. Concepts of globalization and world order became closely interconnected, with globalization significantly influencing the sovereignty of states and transforming their prerogatives. This transformation contributed to the gradual delineation of a new world order, especially after the end of the Cold War, marking a stage where international relations began to institutionalize more. This period saw an expansion of globalization, the increasing importance of international organizations, and global regimes (cooperation, characteristic of liberalism) in areas such as trade, human rights, and environmental protection (a shift from state-centric security to ethno-centric security) [7]. However, this order faces significant challenges,

including the emergence of new regional powers (multipolarity), the rise of nationalism and populism, climate change, and new technologies.

Currently, the world order is in a state of flux, with changes in the distribution of global power, especially due to the rise of countries such as China and India [4]. This transition is complicated by the challenges of globalization, economic crises, technological changes, and geopolitical tensions, suggesting the formation of a complex and interconnected multipolar system [8]. Contemporary debates focus on how the world order should adapt to current realities to remain relevant and effective in managing the increasing complexity and interdependence among states and other international actors.

3. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT OF WORLD ORDER

In the following sections, we will focus on the perspectives of two seminal authors, Henry Kissinger and Immanuel Wallerstein. Both have made significant contributions to the discussion on the structure and dynamics of world order, offering distinct perspectives that reflect different approaches to understanding international relations and the mechanisms governing the global system.

3.1 *Henry Kissinger and the World Order Based on Balance and Diplomacy*

Henry Kissinger, with a realist approach, believes that world order is based on the recognition of national sovereignty and the balance of power established among states. Kissinger argues that international stability is ensured through diplomacy, negotiations, and adherence to a set of internationally agreed-upon rules and norms [9]. He asserts that an „ordered” international system is essential for preventing conflicts and promoting peace and that the balance of power serves as a self-regulating mechanism preventing the dominance of any single state entity [9].

Kissinger emphasizes the importance of state leaders and diplomats in navigating the complexities of international relations and effectively managing conflicts through compromise and mutual understanding. He advocates for a pragmatic and flexible approach that acknowledges the political and cultural diversity of the world and seeks realistic solutions to global problems based on common interests.

3.2 *Immanuel Wallerstein and the Critique of the Capitalist World-System*

Immanuel Wallerstein offers a fundamentally different perspective, analysing world order through the lens of world-systems theory. This theory highlights how capitalism, as a global economic system, produces



structural inequalities between developed countries (the core) and developing countries (the periphery). Wallerstein argues that the dynamics of power in the world system are not merely the result of politics among nations but are profoundly influenced by economic forces that promote exploitation and economic dependency [10].

Wallerstein emphasizes that any attempt to understand or reform world order requires a critical analysis of capitalism and how it perpetuates inequalities. He advocates for structural change as necessary to address fundamental inequalities and create a more equitable and just world order. In his view, overcoming the limits of the nation-state is essential, as is adopting a global perspective in addressing economic and social issues [10].

3.3 *A comparative analysis between Kissinger's and Wallerstein's perspectives*

The comparative analysis of Henry Kissinger's and Immanuel Wallerstein's perspectives on the concept of world order reveals two fundamentally different approaches to the structure and dynamics of international relations. In this section, we will detail the elements that create the contrast between Kissinger's realist and pragmatic vision and Wallerstein's critical analysis of the world system, highlighting how each author understands the mechanisms for maintaining global peace and stability, as well as managing inequalities and conflicts.

Comparing the approaches of the two, it becomes evident that Kissinger and Wallerstein offer two different conceptual frameworks for understanding world order. Kissinger focuses on the importance of the sovereign state and the mechanisms of diplomacy and negotiation in maintaining balance and stability [9]. His vision reflects confidence in the capacity of the international system to manage divergences through mutual respect and cooperation.

On the other hand, Immanuel Wallerstein emphasizes economic structures and the inequalities generated by the global capitalist system. His critique of capitalism and analysis of the world system underlines the need for a re-evaluation of how wealth and power are distributed globally [10]. Wallerstein calls for a reconsideration of the foundations on which world order is built, arguing that long-term stability and equity can only be achieved by directly addressing structural inequalities.

Thus, our observations reiterate that these two leading figures in the field of international relations, Kissinger and Wallerstein, offer different perspectives on solutions for global peace and stability: one based on balance and diplomacy, and the other on structural and economic transformation. Therefore, we believe that the choice between these visions depends on the values and priorities that the international community wishes to promote in shaping the future world order.

4. VIABILITY AND REFORM: REDEFINING WORD ORDER FOR THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

4.1 *Assessing the Viability and Sustainability of the Current World Order*

Evaluating the viability and sustainability of the current world order necessitates a deep understanding of the forces that shape it, as well as the challenges it faces. These challenges include but are not limited to, growing economic and social disparities, climate change phenomena, nuclear proliferation, extensive migration, and pandemics. Such transnational issues require coordinated responses and global solutions, testing the existing structures and institutions of the world order.

The current world order, based on the nation-state system and international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the World Health Organization, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, faces significant challenges in maintaining global peace and security. The system is often criticized for its inability to respond effectively to global crises and for reflecting the interests of dominant powers rather than equitable global needs [11]. This raises serious questions about the long-term viability of the current structure, especially in the face of rapid geopolitical changes and the emergence of new global actors such as transnational corporations and transnational social movements.

Moreover, the sustainability of the world order is questioned, particularly from the perspective of climate change and economic inequalities. Such issues demand multilateral strategies and intensified international collaboration; however, existing frameworks frequently prove insufficiently equipped or too fragmented to initiate rapid and significant transformations [12]. Additionally, the rise of nationalism and the adoption of identity politics in many countries undermine efforts towards global cooperation and threaten to erode the consensus base necessary for addressing common challenges.

4.2 *Reforms for Enhancing the Viability and Sustainability of the World Order*

Substantial reforms of existing international institutions and the development of new global governance mechanisms are essential to improve the viability and sustainability of the world order. We believe these reforms could include:

- Democratizing international institutions: Ensuring fair representation of developing countries within international institutions to reflect global diversity and interests.
- Integrating environmental issues into all policy areas: Promoting sustainable development and

the ecological transition as cross-cutting priorities in all international and national policies.

- Strengthening mechanisms for global economic cooperation: Addressing inequalities through redistribution and development initiatives, as well as establishing global standards for labour and environmental protection.
- Promoting peace and security through multilateral diplomacy: Enhancing diplomacy and international dialogue to prevent conflicts and manage crises through peaceful means.
- Adapting to emerging technologies: Creating ethical and legal frameworks to manage the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and biotechnologies, on global society and economy.

We contend that through these reforms and adaptations, the world order could become resilient in the face of 21st-century challenges, promoting a more peaceful and equitable world. This requires a concerted effort from all global actors, including governments, international institutions, civil society, and the private sector.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Concluding this analysis of the concept of world order, through the perspectives offered by Henry Kissinger and Immanuel Wallerstein, allows us to reflect on the complexity and dynamics of international relations. In this discussion, we aimed to highlight the fundamental differences between Kissinger's realist and strategic vision, which advocates for maintaining the balance of power and stability through diplomacy, and Wallerstein's critical approach, which emphasizes the need to address structural inequalities through a profound transformation of the global capitalist system.

Our work has explored not only the theoretical divergences encompassed in the perspectives of these two authors but has also sought to find answers to questions regarding the viability and sustainability of the current international system. By identifying major global challenges and examining possibilities for reform and adaptation, we have emphasized the importance of a flexible and innovative approach in the face of rapid changes and uncertainties in the international environment.

The conclusion drawn from this discussion is that, despite their conceptual divergences, both Kissinger and Wallerstein contribute to the discourse on the future of world architecture. Recognizing and integrating diverse theoretical frameworks can provide a solid foundation for developing strategies aimed at effectively addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

In this regard, adaptability, international cooperation, and a commitment to sustainable solutions

emerge as key elements in shaping a world order capable of meeting the diverse needs and aspirations of the global community.

Thus, the contribution of this work to the academic debate and the search for solutions to the issues characteristic of current realities lies not only in the comparative analysis of two influential visions but also in promoting a continuous and open dialogue between different schools of thought. Policymakers, researchers in the field, and civil society must initiate close collaboration to create a new world order that is more equitable, stable, and sustainable, which will help successfully overcome the challenges of the present and address those of the future.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I bring thanks and gratitude to the Maritime University of Constanta for the financial support to publish the article presented at the International Session of Scientific Communications of the Students, in Constanta, May 2024, Romania.

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