

GLOBAL ETHICS AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract. The changes caused by the process of globalization in different areas, such as economy, politics, education, society, environment, culture, medicine, have highlighted the need for both ethical evaluations and responses and political accountability at global level. The issue raised in terms of the ethical approach to new global challenges is related to identifying an ethical framework freed from religious colour and specificity of local/ regional values. The article aims to guide ethical reflection on the elements that may stand as grounds for a global ethics. The article states that the ethical approach must be matched by new undertaken political liabilities at State and global levels.

Keywords: *Globalization; Global Ethics; Principles; Universalism; Political Accountability*

Introduction

Globalization¹, as a process increasingly referred to in recent decades, has facilitated the relationships intensifying at planet level in most areas of human activity and has also caused many challenges and anxieties. A challenge is even the definition of globalization because it is a complex, multi-level process with several facets and significant implications for almost every area of human activity, which leads to different wordings and uses. Thus, Ph. Legrain describes globalization as an “open world”², while, for T. L. Friedman, globalization means integration of capital, technology, and information beyond the national borders, the creation of a single global market and, to some extent, a “global village”³.

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¹ This subject was approached more thoroughly in the paper written by Maria Sinaci, “Globalizare și etică globală în secolul XXI” (*Globalization and Global Ethics in XXI Century*), in the vol. V. Hațegan (coord.), *Consilierea filosofică și etică (Philosophical and Ethical Counselling)*, Bucharest, Eikon Publishing House, 2019, pp. 195-216.

² Philippe Legrain, *Open World: The Truth About Globalization*, Chicago, Illinois, Ivan R. Dee, 2004, pp. 3-25.

³ Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999.

There is a tendency among some authors to associate globalization with a process of “Westernization” or “Americanization”, suggesting the dominant role currently played by the American technology, and in this regard we can mention T. Spybey and P.J. Taylor.⁴ From a perspective that involves the heightened movement of people, ideas, and goods transnationally, A. Giddens defines globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”⁵. At the same time, the author draws attention to the fact that the process of globalization is not simply “Westernization”, but a process that increases exposure to cultural pluralism, for example the spread of various musical forms. In a definition that also captures planetary dynamics and interconnectivity in the era of globalization, Held et al. states: “Globalization may be thought of as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual”⁶. There is also no lack of circular definitions of globalization, but they are not helpful in understanding this process. An example of this is the definition of globalization as the “present process of becoming global”⁷.

Attempts to define globalization, as resulting from above, but also from other approaches⁸, lead us to the finding that there are certain ambiguities and limitations in the definition process that could be avoided. This would require a cross-disciplinary approach by using language that would benefit from the widest possible acceptance in most areas of research. Keeping the openness to new formulations, we consider that globalization is a complex dynamic process through which the world is built as a “global village” through intense transnational interactions of economic, cultural, political, technological nature, etc., through a global institutional architecture and the integration of fundamental spiritual values, essential for the development of mankind.

However, globalization also means new problems, new challenges emerge within the contemporary debates taking place on this issue. It is increasingly brought to attention the fact that the interaction between populations, cultures, religions, but also economic processes, environmental, political matters and transnational structures that have acquired planetary dimensions, requires

⁴ Tony Spybey, *Globalization and World Society*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996; Peter J. Taylor, “Izations of the World: Americanization, Modernization and Globalization”, Colin Hay and David Marsh (eds.), *Demystifying Globalization*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, pp. 49-70.

⁵ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 64.

⁶ D. Held, A. McGrew, D. Goldblatt, J. Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economic, and Culture*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 2.

⁷ M. Archer, “Foreword”, M. Albrow and E. Kings (eds.), *Globalization, Knowledge and Society: Readings from International Sociology*, London, Sage, 1990, p. 1.

⁸ For a wider perspective on the globalization, the following works may be studied: Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, London, Penguin, 2003; Malcolm Waters, *Globalization*, London, Routledge, 1996.

approaches from the perspective of a global ethics whose scope of significance and application is extended to most areas (ecology, politics, economics, law, technology, artificial intelligence, etc.). Does globalization make a global ethics possible? If so, what kind of ethics? Would this be a global ethic, or an attempt to globalize ethics? We try to answer these questions, but not only them, in the following sections.

Regarding the first question, our answer is that globalization not only facilitates a global ethical perspective, but it is a necessity because it is through this new area of ethics that solutions are evaluated and sought for the most pressing contemporary issues: climate change, limited resources, terrorism, migration, global pandemics, medical tourism, etc. Therefore, globalization, social and political changes are generating challenges and new dilemmas, and global ethics is a response to all this. How the global problems are solved definitely influences the future of the “global village”, the governance and the applied policies.

Global Ethics or the Globalization of Ethics?

Global ethics has emerged in recent decades, in the context of globalization, as a distinct subject that, through the analysis and evaluation of issues of global importance, seeks to provide guidance based on universally recognized principles and values. Through this way of addressing global ethics issues, it opens a new ethical horizon, from the regional/continental framework to the global dimension. The global ethical perspective available at the level of the “global village” is made possible through a process that involves ethical norms and conceptions that, on one hand, belong to a pre-existing field and, on the other hand, they induce a new understanding of things, appropriate to reality, from the perspective of accountability, rights, and obligations. We are therefore talking about ethics from the perspective of rights, obligations and responsibilities applied globally, like a red thread, but not about a globalization of ethics.

Although global ethics represents is a newer field, the interest of specialists for global ethics is growing, proof being the consistent number of publications in the form of papers, studies, volumes in which the authors treat topics integrated in this field of research, such as environmental ethics, human rights, bioethics, research ethics, etc. But what kind of global ethics? Can we think of ethics that promotes a single principle, or a single set of rules applicable in any situation? This construction would require an ethical consensus that would transgress values, principles, cultures, and religions globally. On the other hand, the tendency to preserve culture, traditions and religion is well known. An ethical construct could be considered global if it had a global level of acceptability, which seems unlikely. And then, if this ethical construction does not seem to be possible, the question arises whether a minimum set of values, criteria or principles that would be present in most cultures could be identified.

Perspectives for Global Ethics in the Age of Globalization

Michael Walzer investigated in his work '*Sphere of Justice*'⁹ such common elements, having an extended approach in *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*¹⁰. The author makes in *Thick and Thin* an analysis of people's attitude and demands during the demonstrations on the streets of Prague in 1989 and finds that they are simply asking for justice and truth. Although he is unfamiliar with the protesters' culture, Walzer identifies with them in what concerns the values they assert¹¹. From the above account emerges the idea that there are certain basal moral values present at the level of humanity, beyond the cultural, religious, or regional / local differences. Starting from this supposition Walzer attributes minimum and maximum meanings to moral terms and advocates a morality differentiated in two planes: minimal morality (thin), a moral minimalism, and maximum (thick) morality, a moral maximalist.

Moral minimalism, or a "basic moral", includes a set of fundamental ethical standards/values – truth, justice, the right to life, integrity. The meaning of thin morality is not unimportant, as it is a "pure (universal) moral", unburdened by specific regional elements, and the author supports the presence of this basic morality in all cultures. Minimalist meanings are "embedded in maximal morality, expressed in the same language". "Minimalism" does not describe a minor or superficial morality, but has to do with moral universalism, and those universal concepts that have minimal meaning are described by "thinness". This is the understanding of thin morality. When a set of universal principles (thin morals) with its entire content becomes enriched and receives a specific connotation in various cultures it portrays itself as a "thick moral" that bears the imprint of historical, cultural, religious, and political circumstances.

Can the thin morality and thick morality of Walzer's conception be interpreted to support ethical consensus? If so, how could it support the concept of global ethics? The element that can support a global ethic and that minimum ethical consensus comes from the thin morality that has a universal character and is limited to the fundamental requirements. As for thick morals, a consensus is not required because the elements of thin morality have the specific cultural aspects by which they differ from other thick morals.

Therefore, we can understand Walzer's approach as one that gives us an elementary morality as the basis or starting point for the foundation of global ethics. Thin morality will also meet the criterion of global acceptability precisely because it supports the presence of those fundamental universal values. On the other hand, global ethics cannot be interpreted as a single ethic for all people, for all social groups, to gain an agreement of the whole world. It also does not internationalize these principles but applies them in a context of global interconnectedness that transcends national and continental barriers and provides a perspective that identifies solutions on a common basis – thin morality – to new

⁹ M. Walzer, *Sphere of Justice. A Defence of Pluralism and Equality*, Basic Books, 1983.

¹⁰ *Idem*, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, chap. 1.

global challenges and dilemmas. The fact that there are certain differences between cultures at the level of thick morality is not an impediment to global ethics because there are themes, principles that are found in almost all cultural traditions, thus constituting a source of inspiration for a global approach.

Another solution is proposed by Hans Küng¹². The author believes that the Golden Rule¹³, a principle present in most of the world's religions, can provide common recommendations for human behaviour in different traditions and cultures¹⁴. An important mention by the author is that ethics does not replace religion, and religion, in turn, does not replace ethics. In his conception, global ethics does not reduce religions to an ethical minimalism but brings to attention the "minimum" of what religions have in common in the area of ethics and from this perspective the Golden Rule, with its content – "Treat others as you would like to be treated" – is found in all the sacred writings of religions, it is therefore the element that unites ethics beyond dogmas. There has been an interest on the part of the world's religions in a global ethic since 1993, expressed by the Chicago meeting of the Parliament of the World's Religions, on which occasion the *Declaration Toward a Global Ethics*¹⁵. In his explanations and observations related to this document¹⁶, H. Küng states that "there is already a consensus among religions that can be the basis for a global ethic, a minimum *fundamental consensus* regarding binding *values*, irrevocable *standards* and moral *fundamental attitudes*"¹⁷. Dalai Lama, for his part, has called for a global ethics, understanding that the new context of globalization also calls for a global ethics¹⁸.

Hans Küng presented a list of principles that he says are the basis for a global ethic. There are mentioned and detailed in the work *Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* four irrevocable directives that form the basis for global ethics:

1. commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life;
2. commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order;
3. commitment to a culture of tolerance and life of truthfulness;
4. commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women¹⁹.

¹² Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

¹³ The Golden Rule, also called the principle of reciprocity, is the most cardinal and common ethical principle of the systems of religious belief from the history of mankind which many other ethical rules derive of.

¹⁴ More detailed on this subject, I have written in the study, "Global Ethics and Religious Values", published in the volume *Debates on Globalization. Approaching National Identity through Intercultural Dialogue*, Târgu-Mureş, Arhipelag XXI, 2015, pp. 303-313.

¹⁵ *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic*, <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org> [accessed 13.02. 2022].

¹⁶ There are some ethical values common to religions, which can be assumed by both believers and unbelievers, researchers, philosophers, theologians or simply by the ordinary citizen of the "global village" who has no specific training in ethics. What is essential is what unites, not what separates religions, especially in the area of doctrines, haunted by centuries of dogmatic disputes.

¹⁷ H. Küng, "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic", www.parliamentofreligions.org/_includes/FCKcontent/File/TowardsAGlobalEthic.pdf 1993 (accessed May 2015).

¹⁸ His Holiness, The Dalai Lama, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, p. xv.

¹⁹ Hans Küng, Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds.), *A Global Ethic. The Declaration of Parliament of the World's Religions*. With commentaries by Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel, New York, London, The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2006, pp. 24-33.

H. Küng's approach drew much criticism, being considered quite controversial and insufficient to be recommended as a global ethic. An obvious inaccuracy, for example, is that which concerns the equality of women with men. It is quite clear that this principle is not present in all religions as not all of them support gender equality.

The practical problems of global ethics are often evaluated of from the perspective of applying ethical theories. The most common attention is directed to the ethics of virtue, utilitarianism, and the Kantian approach. The application of ethical theories to provide answers to big problems can carry certain difficulties related precisely to the global dimension. One answer to this problem is that traditional ethical theories could only "expand" globally if viewed as originating in another area of the globe with typical Western characteristics. This could lead to increased conceptual division between agents and recipients of moral practice. On the other hand, global challenges may require not only a new way in the application of ethical theories, but even new developments in ethics with conceptual reconfigurations²⁰.

Utilitarianism might seem the most appropriate ethical theory for global application. It is a theory that is based on the principle of maximization, and it is precisely this that constitutes a challenge in the global context. J. Mackie called utilitarianism the ethics of fantasy, while wondering how maximization could be achieved across the globe, with a large number of stakeholders to consider. How could happiness be distributed equally, or proportionally to a particular merit?²¹ A Kantian approach proposed by Onora O'Neill²² to be developed is centred on justice – as an ethical principle, which she calls transnational justice. The so-called theories of justice should be viewed with more circumspection in global application. Several authors have expressed reluctance to the transnational perspective, considering that justice is rather a national issue²³.

Robert Audi²⁴ combines traditional ethical theories – virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and Kantian ethics – into an approach in which he proposes a model of global ethics²⁵. In this approach, the author indicates three conceptually independent factors, which must be considered by an ethical theory: (1) happiness – in the sense of well-being, conceived in terms of pleasure, pain and suffering; (2) justice – in the sense of treating all persons equally; (3) freedom. In essence,

²⁰ R. Chadwick, A. O'Connor, "Ethical theory and global challenges", in Darrel Moellendorf, Heather Widdows (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Global Ethics*, London and New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2015, pp. 25-26.

²¹ John L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, Penguin Books, 1990.

²² Onora O'Neill, *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

²³ A. Deaton, "What Does the Empirical Evidence Tell Us About the Injustice of Health Inequalities?" SSRN eLibrary, 2011, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1746951 (accessed September 2021); T. Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33(2), 2015, pp. 113-47.

²⁴ R. Audi, *Moral Value and Human Diversity*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 17.

²⁵ The study was more thoroughly approached in Maria Sinaci, "Globalizare și etică globală în secolul XXI" (*Globalization and global ethics in XXI century*), in the vol. V. Hațegan (coord.), *Consilierea filosofică și etică (Ethical and Philosophical Counselling)*, Bucharest, Eikon Publishing House, 2019, pp. 195-216.

the three classical ethical theories have the following characteristics: the theory of virtue focuses on the “man of character”, a person who has a good and happy life, through the cultivation of virtues, without there being a prescribed norm that should be generally followed (we keep in mind, however, that the virtuous person, through his behaviour, avoids excesses); utilitarianism evaluates actions from the perspective of consequences and through the Principle of the Greatest Happiness aims at maximizing well-being, happiness and reducing pain; Kantian ethics emphasizes the principle of universal law and the treatment of people as goals in themselves, along with the principle of autonomy. For the integration of the three theories into a global ethical framework, R. Audi proposes a broad moral principle, pluralistic universalism, which he defines as follows: “On this approach – call it pluralist universalism – our broadest moral principle would require optimizing happiness so far as possible without producing injustice or curtailing freedom (including one’s own); and this principle is to be internalized – roughly, automatically presupposed and normally also strongly motivating – in a way that yields moral virtue. Each value becomes, then, a guiding standard, and mature moral agents will develop a sense of how to act (or at least how to reach a decision to act) when the values pull in different directions”²⁶.

The essential features of Audi’s project are: (1) no specific, unique standard can be the only moral guide; (2) pluralism of values. Central values, such as happiness, freedom, justice, on the one hand, are understood as guiding standards in making decisions and carrying out actions, and on the other hand, values provide standards for evaluating actions. None of the values is more important than the others, nor can it be reduced to another. To maintain balance and avoid contradictory situations, Audi proposes a rule of priority: justice and freedom take precedence (or, at least, they normally do) over considerations of happiness, which it therefore outperforms. In fact, the author states that justice and freedom (probably) do not contradict each other because justice requires the highest possible level of freedom, within the limits of peaceful coexistence.²⁷

The pluralistic universalist principle proposed by Audi seems to be quite indeterminate and somewhat difficult to apply. So, what more specific moral principles could guide decision-making? How could these principles be specified? One way to specify the principles that could be applied is the method developed by Henry Richardson, published in the paper *Specifying Norms as a Way to Resolve Concrete Ethical Problems*.²⁸ Specifying the principle is understood as a way to make it more determined in the content, to bring more concreteness, and to endow it with specific possibilities of guidance. The characteristic of Richardson’s project was to extend the idea of movement beyond the “up-down”, the application of the deductive rule or the “bottom-up” alternative. It is considered how through specification guidance for actions can

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ S. H. Richardson, “Specifying Norms as a Way to Resolve Concrete Ethical Problems”, in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, No. 19, 1990, pp. 279-310.

be transmitted, thus becoming more characteristic of given situations²⁹. In this theory is integrated the intuitionism of W. D. Ross, the principles functioning as *prima facie* duties, each being able to outperform the others, depending on the context, without being hierarchical. Audi introduces a criterion into its construction, but it, as it states, is intended to avoid potential conflicts between principles, not to place them in an order.³⁰ The real, concrete duty cannot, however, be inferred from *prima facie* obligations since a *prima facie* obligation identifies only morally relevant universal characteristics. It can be inferred that Audi's project does not give us the direction as to what exactly to do, nor the importance of particular actions in concrete situations. But the link between the general principles and the concrete cases is achieved through specification, which brings an increase in clarity and maximizes the coherence of the ethical construction. The framework of pluralistic universalism proposed by Robert Audi can be considered a basis for global ethics.

More recent approaches to globalization and ethics have highlighted the need to extend these concepts so that they are fit for concrete reality. In Kazuisa Fujimoto's opinion, globalization should not be "reduced to a simple geographical concept of the world"³¹. At the same time, the existence of the planet should be considered as a continuum, an extension from the past to the future, "a process of eternal becoming", so that future generations do not lose the meaning of the present world. As for ethics, it argues in favour of a broad ethic adapted to the new context, with the following turns: "(1) from Presentism to Futurism (consideration of the world to come); (2) from restrictive consideration for Humanity to general consideration for all lives or all beings; (3) from individual subject to collective subject in responsibility"³².

Globalization and the New Imperative of Accountability

Scientific discoveries in recent decades have facilitated people's access to information and biotechnologies whose application concerns the human being, such as genetic manipulation, research on the expansion of life, medically assisted human reproduction, behaviour control etc., all of which have particularly serious ethical implications. Thus, technology becomes from a force of progress, an ethical problem that involves an enormous amount of accountability. Globalization and the new challenges specific to this period had major influences on the concept of accountability and the given meanings.

Hans Jonas, in the work *The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for Technological Age*³³, draws attention to the fact that the benefits and

²⁹ Maria Sinaci, *Normativitate și bioetică. Aspecte filsoofice contemporane (Normativity and Bioethics. Contemporary Philosophical Aspects)*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House, 2014, pp. 158-159.

³⁰ W. D. Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939.

³¹ Kazuhsa Fujimoto, "Globalization and Ethics for Future", *Waseta Rilas Journal*, No. 1, 2013, pp. 165-170.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 168.

³³ Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for Technological Age*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

promises of modern technology are a threat, and the technology itself cannot be separated from this threat. In his analysis of technology Jonas starts from the *techne* concept, with an approach from an ethical perspective. Beyond the threat posed by technology, it is quite clear that technology has become so important that it must be understood as a force that moves things towards progress and a main form of human development³⁴. The concept of accountability has been given a new dimension because it must do not only with the generation now, but also with future generations, to whom we have moral obligations. Jonas points out these aspects and states that “the intrusion of distant future and global scales into our everyday, mundane decisions is an ethical novum which technology has thrust on us; and the ethical category pre-eminently summoned by this novel fact is: *responsibility*”³⁵.

Jonas’s approach begins with an analysis of traditional ethics to identify characteristics relevant to the current context and finds that there are four fundamental problems:

1. “All dealing with the nonhuman world, that is, the whole realm of *techne* (with the exception of medicine), was ethically neutral”.
2. “All traditional ethics is *anthropocentric*”.
3. “For action in this domain, the entity “man” and his basic condition was considered constant in essence and not itself an object of reshaping *techne*”.
4. “The good and evil about which action had to care lay close to the act, either in the praxis itself or in its immediate reach [...]. Ethics accordingly was of the here and now”³⁶.

The conclusion is that these characteristics deliver a moral area that allows for a limited ethical approach. For example, says the author, the integrity of the biosphere was not a sphere of ethical significance. The shortcomings can be easily noticed by reference to the new technology that influences our lives and actions so much. In this new context Jonas proposes to resize the concept of accountability so as to encompass future generations in order to have an “authentic human life”. It also envisages the conservation of nature because its destruction would pose a threat to the very essence of the human being. These ideas are expressed through the reformulation of the Kantian categorical imperative “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with - the permanence of genuine human-life”³⁷. Two important aspects emerge from Jonas’ expressed concept: the global dimension of accountability and a temporal horizon of it that transcends the present and the immediate future, correlated with the free actions “the claims on responsibility grow proportionately with the deeds of power”³⁸. Therefore, the power of action and accountability have to do with the very existence of future generations. But we may wonder how all these

³⁴ Richard J. Bernstein, “Rethinking Responsibility”, *The Hastings Centre Report*, Vol. 25, No. 7, 1995, p. 17.

³⁵ Hans Jonas, “Technology as a Subject for Ethics”, *Social Research*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1982, p. 893.

³⁶ *Idem*, *The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for Technological Age*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 4-5.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

³⁸ Hans Jonas, “Technology as a Subject for Ethics”, p. 893.

challenges can be handled responsibly in order to ensure the security of the essence of human nature over time and the preservation of the biosphere? Who should show accountability and to what?

In everyday life the accountability lies with the moral agent. Jonas's theory gives a global dimension to accountability because it is only through a widely assumed accountability that the desiderata of preserving the "idea of man", of nature, can be realized so that the generations to come can lead an authentic human life. Jonas says that the use of technology requires rules so that there is an ethical regulatory framework. At this point in the discussion, it is necessary to intervene the global ethics regarding human biotechnologies and the ethics of the environment. Global ethics can provide tools for articulating a global ethical regulatory framework³⁹.

H. Berdinesen⁴⁰ assumes the existence of three necessary conditions for accountability: (1) causal effect – action influences the world; (2) the action is under the control of the moral actor; 3. The actor may specify to a certain extent the consequences of his actions. Two quite different forms of accountability can be identified in this approach. The first is the formal accountability, according to which the moral agent is responsible for his actions and can be sanctioned or awarded. The second form is the "substantial" accountability that Jonas is concerned about. It refers to the accountability of a moral agent towards objects in relation to which he undertakes to take certain actions. "Substantial" accountability is in Jonas' attention when referring to future generations and our accountability. Knowing the risks and threats to the use of technology makes us accountable. Because our knowledge of all this is greatly enriched compared to past decades, we are substantially responsible.

There remains, however, a question of normative assessments of future generations in relation to the use of technology. That's because we don't know their value preferences, nor whether they will interpret current problems and concepts in a different light. We may also wonder to what extent the Accountability Imperative advocated by Jonas can be of importance in the age of globalization. Aren't there too general issues and approaches to his theory? It is true that Jonas appeals to arguments of a general level, but on the other hand there are fundamental principles that can engage humanity in all areas, not just in small areas. The merit of Jonas' conception of accountability is that it invites debates on major issues that are particularly topical (climate change and environmental protection, security of human genetic heritage, responsible use of resources, etc.) and it challenges politicians to act through long-term policies, to think about the effects that their decisions can have. Another merit of the Jonassian approach is the resizing of the concept of accountability in the sense of adapting it to a globalized world and for a long-time horizon, aimed at future generations.

³⁹ We mention few documents issued at global level and structured in an ethical framework: Oviedo Convention – The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine, April 1997; The Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, 2006; Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists, 2008.

⁴⁰ Hein Berdinesen, "On Hans Jonas. The Imperative of Responsibility", *Philosophia*, 17, 2017, pp. 21-22.

From Ethics to Global Political Accountability

Ethical accountability in managing the challenges and problems existing in the era of globalization is particularly important and, here, attempts are being made to identify solutions, including through statements aimed, for example, at protecting the environment, or the dignity of the human being towards the applications of biology and medicine, based on moral principles. Globally, leaders have repeatedly referred to ethical accountability and organized events on the subject, some ending with the adoption of conventions, at continental or global level, as the case may be. But the language of ethical accountability is required to be doubled by political accountability. Globalization increasingly highlights the global interdependence of states from the perspective of common needs and risks, a context in which governments responsible to their own people in the management of internal problems involve states in participating in conventions, signing declarations assumed, or taking decisions based on norms recognized as such.

The fact that political accountability is a rather elusive concept has generated different meanings and uses. The lack of clarity and understanding also results from the fact that there is often a confusion between political accountability and moral or legal accountability. That is why we make it clear that in a broad sense, by the concept of political accountability, we understand those social duties and responsibilities specific to the act of government. Unlike moral accountability, political accountability involves both a set of social duties and responsibilities specific to the act of governance, based on rules, and levers aimed at decision-making structures at the level of governments.

Political accountability is a matter of leadership, it involves governance, the management of social, cultural events, etc. so that the basic needs of a people are met. Leslie Green argues for a fundamental “duty to govern”⁴¹. This duty lies in the needs of the common good, and “those who have the effective capacity to solve it bear the responsibility of doing so.”⁴². It can therefore be said that this is a matter of governing needs, of paying those who are legitimate to lead by the obligations involved in the accountability of governance. What does it mean to pay off this debt effectively, when we can talk about good governance? Standing within the same terminological framework, we can talk about good governance when the basic needs of a people, its fundamental rights are met, therefore governance is responsible. It remains an open question about whether those basic needs of the people are not met by the government.

R. Beardsworth argues that modern political accountability consists of: (1) an institutionalized relation between governors and governed (the state and civil society); (2) an institutionalized disposition that answers the needs of the governed (the social contract ensuring the welfare of citizens); and (3) an institutionalized disposition that is accountable in some form or other to the will

⁴¹ Leslie Greene, “The Duty to Govern”, *Legal Theory* 13, No. 3-4, 2007, pp. 165-85.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 171.

of the governed (modern political authority)⁴³. Collins draws attention to the fact that there is a tendency “to think states have moral duties: duties to alleviate global warming, protect citizens’ moral rights, admit asylum seekers, or wage only just wars. This common-sense view accords with a growing philosophical consensus that States are corporate moral agents able to bear duties”⁴⁴. In his argument about state accountability, Collins introduces two decision-making plans. A decision-making plan is of the members. Another, with very clear rules and decision-making procedures distinct from those of the members, is of the states. Political accountability is expressed by the government both internally, at national level, and externally, at the international level, out of the same concern for the needs of the common good. Domestic political accountability should be linked to global challenges so as to be a response of the states concerned to them. In such a context, internal political accountability transcends the national space and acquires a supranational character, through an articulation between the two dimensions, national and global.

Starting from the “duty to govern” for the satisfaction of the common good and the existing interdependence on needs, which is increasingly accentuated in the era of globalization, the state has a political duty to identify solutions and solve the challenges, a measure that also implies a political accountability for the decisions taken in relation to the causes of that problem. When the political duty of a state is articulated in a collective effort to solve a transnational problem, the state expresses its political accountability not only to its own people, but also indirectly responds to the needs of other people. This is an approach to political accountability from the perspective of the political duty of the state to satisfy the common good of the people, their basic needs. Fulfilling the political duty to one’s own people can also be a response to the needs of others. Therefore, in a globalized era, the political accountability of the state is directed towards its own people, but it is also connected to global needs, thus the political accountability becomes a global one, achieving an effective cooperation and support between the national and the global.

It should also be noted that political accountability does not only involve the actions of governments, but also the assumption of a political accountability in the civic area for achieving a change. I. M. Young⁴⁵ articulates a project of social accountability, a project that, through the concept of accountability promoted, constitutes a response to the moral dilemmas of globalization and also a retaliation to individualism. The author develops a model of social connection characterized by the fact that the accountability is borne to varying degrees by each individual, corresponding to the social connection he has. In the proposed model, Young tries to counter the restriction of accountability to a strictly personal dimension and brings to attention accountability as a result of connections

⁴³ Richard Beardsworth, “From Moral to Political Responsibility in a Globalized Age”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 29, Nr. 1, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 76.

⁴⁴ S. Collins, “Distributing States’ Duties”, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2016, p. 344.

⁴⁵ Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 92, 46.

with others and that extends beyond a person's action and the effects generated. Thus, "a responsible person tries to deliberate about options before acting, makes choices that seem to be the best for all affected, and worries about how the consequences of his or her actions may adversely affect others"⁴⁶ Unlike Young, H. Arendt⁴⁷ specifies a framework of accountability in which members of society bear the political actions of the governors. For Arendt, community members bear this accountability equally, not because of a social connection, as in the model Young proposes, but because of belonging to a political community.

Conclusion

Globalization has a particular impact on humanity both through the changes taking place globally, in most areas of activity, and through the increasingly complex challenges and problems that humanity has to face. Most frequently mentioned are issues related to the global economy, nuclear weapons, global warming, limited resources, global pandemics, migration, terrorism, medical tourism, etc. It is necessary to apply a global ethical perspective to these challenges of global dimension. The ethics debates of recent years have revolved around the possibility of achieving an ethical construction appropriate to the global dimension of the challenges, given that there have been opinions that this could not be materialized. We have presented three conceptions that can be the basis for a global ethic, and we have argued in this respect. The thesis supported is that for the construction of global ethics, several essential aspects should be considered: the definition of terms, their extension and use in the specified sense, as well as the identification of the principles, which are the moral values respected in most cultures. We have also pointed out that global issues require a type of global accountability which can be expressed through appropriate policies at global level. Political accountability implies also, in addition to the actions of governments on global issues, the assumption of civic accountability that can bring about change.

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⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁴⁷ H. Arendt, "Collective responsibility", in J. Kohn (ed.), *Responsibility and Judgement*, New York, Schocken Books, 2003, pp. 147-158.

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