**NAME: AKWAWO MICHELLE KENNEDY**

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**COURSE TITLE: LOGIC OF WORLD ORDER**

**QUESTION: Is there a Manifestation of Order or Disorder in the Present World? Analyze logically and in line with global realities.**

**INTRODUCTION**

World order is one of the fundamental concepts of international relations, as well as a lens through which to view and understand global developments and foreign policy choices. The contemporary global order is widely said to be in crisis. But despite a rapidly proliferating literature on the subject, there is little clarity or consensus about wherein the ‘crisis’ consist, or what precisely is under threat. Only if one or more of the foundational principles of post-war global order are systematically violated, can one speak of a demise of the order.

**CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ORDER**

its main foundational ordering principles: national sovereignty, economic liberalism and inclusive, rule-based multilateralism (Ikenberry 2001; Martin 1992; Ruggie 1993). The first two are substantive ordering principles (which were first practiced in the political West before extending to the post-colonial world and, with the end of the Cold War, across the globe, while the third principle is procedural.

1. The global order is inter-national and state-led, based on principles of sovereign equality and national self-determination. This means that national governments are the primary actors responsible for making and implementing international rules and policies (Barkin and Cronin 1994).
2. The order is liberal insofar as it promotes economic openness and interdependence between most countries worldwide (Ikenberry 2018).

To sustain these substantive principles, governments have endorsed a procedural principle of multilateralism, which includes two aspects.

1. Rule-based justifications and behavior: The order is constructed around a set of widely agreed-upon rules and principles, enshrined in and premised on general respect for international law, including on the use of military force (Shelter-Jones 2017).
2. Inclusivity: Relations are based on generalized principles of conduct, involving ‘non-discrimination’, ‘indivisibility’ and a rejection of specific, quid-pro-quo exchanges in favour of seeking long-term collective gains from cooperation (Martin 1992; Ruggie 1993).

These three foundational principles can be in tension. For example, principles of sovereignty and economic liberalism sometimes clash. These tensions make the contemporary global order a dynamic construct in which contestation and renegotiation of relations can occur without undermining the order as such.

**CRISIS ‘WITHIN’ OR ‘OF’ THE ORDER?**

When considering whether the current order is in demise, it is crucial to distinguish between crisis within and crisis of the order. New actors and changing power constellations inevitably lead to challenges and change. But while some aspects of the global order may change without undermining its basic ordering principles, other forms of change would transform it into an essentially new order by transforming one or more of its foundational principles.

The erosion of state sovereignty and the replacement of the current state-led global order with either a single world government (Wendt 2003), or with a neo-medieval order in which political authority is exercised by a variety of non-territorial agents with overlapping jurisdiction (Bull 1977) would fundamentally undermine the global order as we have defined it.

Other transformative developments might include a revival of imperialism and colonialism, or a general breakdown of multilateral cooperation and a return to mercantilism or closed regional trading blocks. Mass withdrawal from existing international organizations (without their replacement), or a general turn away from multilateralism towards persistent unilateralism or deals-based bilateralism (Shelter-Jones 2017) would likewise undermine the order.

On the other hand, deadlocked multilateral negotiations, non-compliance, or renegotiation of existing agreements (Copelovitch et al., 2019) do not necessarily strike us as fundamental challenges. Many international actors regard multilateralism as a-means-to-an-end. They may disagree on substantive goals such as a more ambitious climate change policy, anti-terrorism regime, etc. But while ends may be heavily contested, the procedural principle of acting multilaterally is much less so

**CONCLUSION**

This analytical framework should help one judge whether the contemporary global order is in crisis, and to determine wherein a possible crisis might consist at the international level. There are numerous important challenges confronting global multilateral organizations. Nonetheless I argue that – for now at least – the basic pillars of the global order stand.

The dispersion of power in the international system has not only been associated with greater heterogeneity of preferences and resulting disputes, but also with growing participation in core international institutions by both state and non-state actors, and with the proliferation of new institutions through which diverging preferences can be arbitrated. Sovereignty and economic liberalism remain important features of these multilateral fora. This signals a transition from a global order constructed around a few commanding international organizations dominated by powerful Western states, to a more multifaceted order based on complex and polycentric governance arrangements among a wider community of national governments, international organizations and non-state actors.

While this growing complexity presents significant challenges of coordination, it does not fundamentally contest foundational principles of sovereign equality, economic openness, and rule-based multilateral interactions. Indeed, it might be said that whereas the global order has previously rested on a ‘thin’ principle of inclusivity – meaning that participation in global institutions was in principle open to all states that agreed to abide by their basic rules and goals – we are currently moving towards a ‘thicker’ notion of inclusivity where more actors and a greater diversity of interests are represented across different fora. Of course, what currently appears as critical changes within the global order may over time come to present a crisis and possible major transformation of the order.

Ultimately, there are clear indications of contestation and conflict. However, so far none of these challenges present fatal blows to the core of the global order. What we are currently witnessing, may not be the impending crisis and collapse of the global order, but rather its ongoing transformation from within.

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