

# Global Challenges

## Multilevel Governance

### 1. The debate about globalization

The term *globalization* has been increasingly used since the mid-1980s and especially since the mid-1990s. According to a broad consensus, people are now more connected across the globe than ever before. Aside of this main idea, however, there are various globalization debates amongst scholars and in public. As the term became a popular buzzword, it served to crystallize disagreements about the direction of change in the world at large. Intellectual debate blended with political conflicts under various aspects.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Process versus Project*

According to one popular view, globalization is the *inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach round the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before.*<sup>2</sup> People are now more connected across the globe than ever before. By contrast, some groups of scholars and activists view globalization not as an inexorable process but as a deliberate, ideological project of economic liberalization that subjects states and individuals to more intense market forces.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Interpretation: New Era versus Nothing New*

Discussions of globalization often convey a sense that something new is happening to the world: Global practices, values, and technologies now shape people's lives to the point that we are entering a *global age*; a new world order

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<sup>1</sup> The following passages on globalization debate (until p.3) tightly correspond with (February 16, 2015): <http://sociology.emory.edu/faculty/globalization/debates.html>

<sup>2</sup> T. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> P. Mc. Michael, *Development and Social Change*, 2000; P. Hirst and G. Thompson, *Globalization in Question*, 1996.

is emerging, according to *hyperglobal* accounts.<sup>4</sup> Sceptics counter that there is nothing new under the sun since globalization is age-old capitalism writ large across the globe.<sup>5</sup> Governments and regions retain distinct strengths in a supposedly integrated world, or the world is even fragmenting into civilizational blocs.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Evaluation: Good vs. Bad*

Aside of the USA where the term globalization was prevailingly used in a positive connotation for long time, concerns about the consequences of global change for the well-being of various groups, the sovereignty and identity of countries, the disparities among peoples, and the health of the environment traditionally have been in the focus of the globalization debate.<sup>7</sup> Politicians opposed to America's global influence and activists opposed to the inequities of oppressive global capitalism now portray globalization as dangerous. Globalization has thus become an issue in a wide-ranging global debate.

#### *Explanation: "Hard" vs. "Soft"*

Many authors attribute the dynamics of globalization to the pursuit of material interests by dominant states and multinational companies that exploit new technologies to shape a world in which they can flourish according to rules they set.<sup>8</sup> An alternative view suggests that globalization is rooted in an expanding consciousness of living together on one planet, a consciousness that takes the concrete form of models for global interaction and institutional development that constrain the interests of even powerful players and relate any particular place to a larger global whole).<sup>9</sup>

#### *Political: End versus Revival of Nation-State*

According to one line of argument, globalization constrains states: free trade limits the ability of states to set policy and protect domestic companies; capital mobility makes generous welfare states less competitive; global problems

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<sup>4</sup> M. Albrow, *The Global Age*, 1997 ; Held et al., *Global Transformations*, 1999

<sup>5</sup> I. Wallerstein, "Globalization or The Age of Transition?", 1999

<sup>6</sup> S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996

<sup>7</sup> Positive: T. Friedman, 1999; J. Micklethwait/A. Wooldridge, *A Future Perfect*, 2000 ; negative: Hirst and Thompson, 1996; J. Mittelman, ed., *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, 1996)

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>9</sup> R. Robertson, 1992; J. Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State," *Am. J. of Soc.* 1997

exceed the grasp of any individual state; and global norms and institutions become more powerful.<sup>10</sup> Others suggest that in a more integrated world nation-states may even become more important: they have a special role in creating conditions for growth and compensating for the effects of economic competition; they are key players in organizations and treaties that address global problems; and they are themselves global models charged with great authority by global norms.<sup>11</sup>

### *Cultural: Sameness versus Difference*

A standard complaint about globalization is that it leads to cultural homogeneity: interaction and integration diminish difference; global norms, ideas or practices overtake local mores; many cultural flows, such as the provision of news, reflect exclusively Western interests and control; and the cultural imperialism of the United States leads to the global spread of American symbols and popular culture.<sup>12</sup> The counterargument stresses new heterogeneity that results from globalization: interaction is likely to lead to new mixtures of cultures and integration is likely to provoke a defense of tradition; global norms or practices are necessarily interpreted differently according to local tradition, and one such norm stresses the value of cultural difference itself; cultural flows now originate in many places; and America has no hegemonic grasp on a world that must passively accept whatever it has to sell.<sup>13</sup>

## **2. Global challenges**

Meanwhile processes of globalization are less considered as strictly given, enthusiastically celebrated or hatefully attacked. They rather appear as more or less intertwined challenges of research and good governance. An illustrative example of this turn constitutes the *Millenium Project*, a US dominated project

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<sup>10</sup> K. Ohmae, *The End of the Nation-State*, 1995.

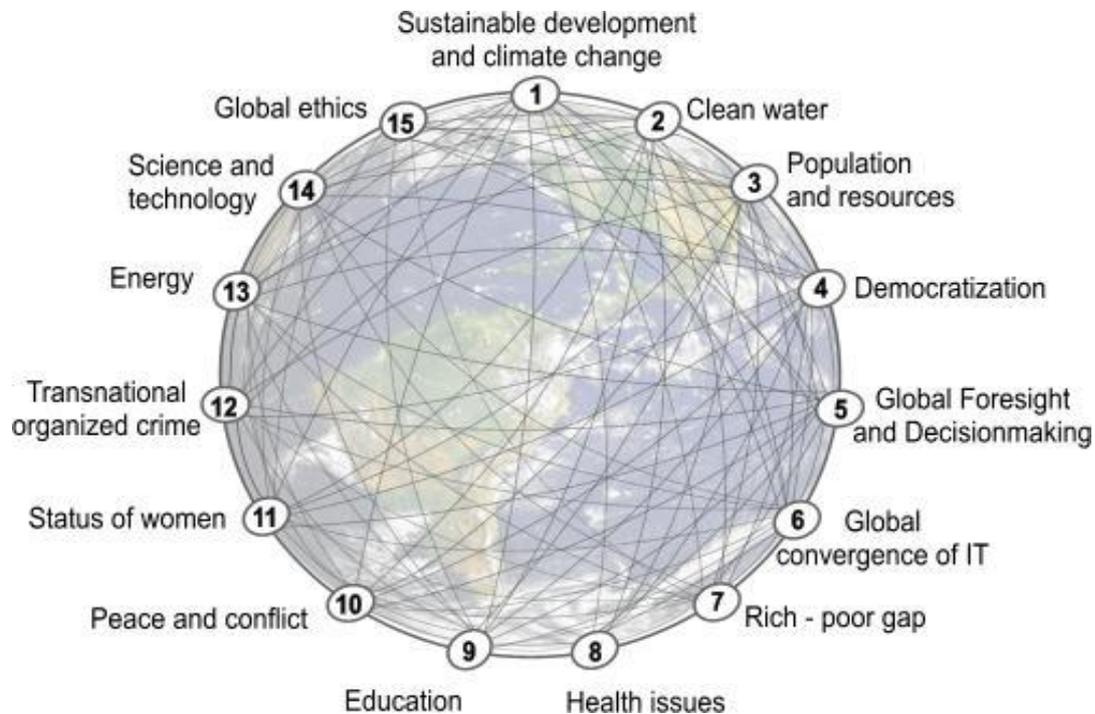
<sup>11</sup> Weidner, Helmut / Jänicke, Martin (eds.): *Capacity Building in National Environmental Policy. A comparative Study of 17 Countries*. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York.: Springer 2002, 443 ps.

<sup>12</sup> H. Schiller, *Mass Communications and American Empire*, 1969; C. Hamelink, *The Politics of World Communication*, 1994

<sup>13</sup> <http://sociology.emory.edu/faculty/globalization/debates.html>

on future studies, research and fund raising, that proclaims 15 global challenges for humanity (see figure 1).<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1: 15 Global Challenges for Humanity**



Source: February 16, 2015: <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/challeng.html>

Do you detect any structure of challenges in this figure? I can't. Rather I see a mix of practical challenges in the perspective of a well-doing OECD country, reaching from environmental and health aspects to socio-political and other aspects, such as organized crime. At it some given problems, bus most of all given interests of research and consulting appear to be decisive.

In contrast to those unstructured and arbitrary catalogues, a model-based analysis of globalization enables to perceive a structure of global challenges. As orientating model I use the **idea of completing globalization**:

<sup>14</sup> February 16, 2015: <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/plancom.html>; on sponsors see: <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/sponsors.html>

- For a long time, globalization has been realized first and foremost by particularly powerful actors, such as by big financial capital and multinational corporations. Those actors of big business used special opportunities of globalization for strengthening their corporate interests in charge of public interests - so by maximizing profits in charge of workers and staffers, by arbitrary investment and global speculation, by systematic tax fraud or *tax avoiding*, and by globally externalizing environmental costs. Public demands of everyday life and democratic political decision-making, in contrast, were traditionally bound to subnational, regional, or national spheres. That's way hitherto globalization has been **economically exploiting, and asymmetric globalization**. No wonder that it met with broad disapproval amongst observers near to trade unions, civil society organizations and (social) democratic parties.
- Meanwhile **other processes** of globalization have started to run or have even reached some progress: A) Global streams of information and communication that initially were limited to certain elites meanwhile have become much broader, especially by usage of the internet and mobile phone technologies. B) Increasing parts of the developed countries' people are meanwhile globally mobile, being tourists or job-searching labor forces. C) Also parts of developing and even parts of the poor countries' population, particularly young men, meanwhile try to reach developed countries increasingly successfully. D) Not primarily economic forces, especially religions, such as Islam, meanwhile globally diffuse forced by global migration, but also by strategic investments of rich oil states, such as Saudi-Arabia. E) Modern technical and economic means are also increasingly used by terroristic networks in trying to spread their anachronistic messages and aims. Through all these developments, globalization becomes more diverse beyond spreading US-American economic culture.
- Finally, impacts and problems of globalization are increasingly reflected in social sciences, political consulting, and international politics. That's why globalization attains also a political side that hitherto had not yet been perceived: Public interests in global governance are increasingly reflected and more and more subjects of scientific and political programs - see forms of global regulation in financial and economic world markets, global

environmental regimes, and global security debates. By that, globalization promises to become a **more complete, problem-sensitive process** beyond being an elitist project of exploitation.

### 3. Earth state and multilevel governance

How can and should globalization be managed in a socio-politically comprising, problem-sensitive way?

A first answer, that is hitherto quite unusual, refers to a **complete state**: Corresponding with the usual image of a functioning nation-state, a global state could be conceived of. So a functioning global state disposes at a monopoly of the legitimate use of force, whereby it is able to safe peace. It constitutes a well-organized system of global decision-making; it contributes to balancing existing functional subsystems and sub-global institutions. It is sufficiently problem-sensitive and able to effectively pursue public policies, such as averting immediate hazards, meeting routine demands and fostering global development. At it, is does not take essential freedoms from sub-global, such as national, entities.

Such an **Earth state** requires not only a well-organized government, but also sufficient commitment of political actors and a widespread attitude of citizenship. Sufficient people all around the world would have to accept common institutions and should participate in governance in a responsible manner - everything highly ambitious demands. That's why it is to be expected that the concept of such a state will meet critiques as being naïve (unrealizable) or even dangerous because it may be misused by strong actors at power. Nevertheless I'd like to emphasize the argument that any analysis of globalization without having ideas of a balanced globalization including an institutional frame of state and public policies cannot be reasonable and helpful. Since any concept that only reproduces elitist and exploiting globalization features obstructs the view on possible alternatives and on practically given capacities of a better way.

The Earth State model referred to here, indeed, should not be understood as a one level model; public tasks and problems - see for instance climate change - rather can be managed only by governance on various levels, from private and

neighborhood levels to communal, regional, national, international and global levels. Vice versa, any functioning Earth state presupposes a complex foundation of sub-global election processes and decision-making. Concerning the balance between these different levels, three principles should be valid:

- 1) The **principle of subsidiarity**, i.e. the principle of dealing with a task or a problem at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with its solution. Only to the degree a challenge cannot be met on a certain level, a higher level of institution shall get active.
- 2) **The federal principle**: Lower levels of state must not be one-sidedly dissolved by a higher level. In other words, any institution on a higher level, such as the global level, is unavoidably bound to an agreement regulation on the lower level(s). Indeed, possible agreement regulations are not reduced to complete consent regulations; they may, rather, operate also with majority-building, election systems of various types, or other jointly accepted procedures.
- 3) **Universal civil rights**: Any involved actor down to any Earth citizen has all human rights that give him (or her) the necessary sovereignty to take part in global decision-making and governance as a free actor.

As an example see the overdue effective fight against powerful terroristic organizations like Boko Haram in African countries, such as Cameroun, Nigeria, and Niger: Effective military efforts against those organizations have to be brought about by the affected national states. To the degree, they are not able to resist, regional (African) cooperation appears to be necessary and fitting. In any case, we talk about **multilevel governance**, projecting an Earth state.