Markets, Governments, Communities and Global Governance

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abstract: In this article the author introduces the argument by stating what should be changed in our sociological perspectives, stressing the contradictory character of the social world in the 21st century as a single system and a fragmented world, and identifying global integration and global governance as key problematic questions. He then addresses these questions from a sociological perspective, updating existing theories and discussing the role of markets, government organizations and communities as institutional mechanisms of social integration and governance of the world system. More specifically, he examines: (1) international markets and transnational corporations (TNCs) as institutions that operate largely, although not exclusively, according to the exchange principle; (2) nation-states, international organizations, and supranational unions as institutions that operate largely, although not exclusively, according to the legitimate authority principle; and (3) collective movements and epistemic communities as institutions that operate largely, although not exclusively, according to the solidarity principle. Finally, the author explains his notion of democratic global governance and analyses the main factors favouring or hindering peaceful integration and democratic governance at the world level.

keywords: collective movements ◆ European Union ◆ international associations ◆ markets ◆ nation-states

The social world at the beginning of the 21st century is increasingly one world, but at the same time remains fragmented, conflict-ridden, hierarchical and unequal. It is at one and the same time a global system and a fragmented world, with unprecedented opportunities of greater justice

and well-being for all, and unprecedented threats of nuclear war and ecological catastrophe.

Globalization requires a basic redefinition of major concepts of the sociological tradition. We all know that sociology has developed as a discipline together with the modern world and that the unit of analysis of most macrosociological research has been the national society. Deep and thorough social transformations, such as the ones occurring in the age of globalization, nurture the need for new concepts, new theories and new narratives. In the 17th and 18th centuries, a scientific revolution took place alongside the economic and political revolutions, first in the physical and natural sciences and then in the social sciences. Today, the speed of scientific and technological innovations and the scope of social changes have not been matched by a parallel development of new paradigms and theories of the social world. Some think that the main cause of this state of affairs is the fragmentation of knowledge, while others focus on the lack of confidence in the interpretative capacity of social scientists themselves. The result is that the sociological imagination often gives the impression of lagging behind and being inadequate to confront the scope of transformation. Beck (1997) exaggerates in pointing out that most contemporary sociologists work with 'zombie-concepts', but it is true that we have to modify our perspective and follow Rabelais' Gargantua's advice to avoid 'the building of the new with dead stones'.

What Should be Changed in our Sociological Perspectives?

First, sociologists have generally studied their own societies and more seldom societies other than their own, but they have usually regarded societies as if they were separate entities, each with its own clear-cut national boundaries. Their focus has been on acquiring an understanding of a society's internal dynamics and structures, its distinctive cultural code, its specific mechanisms of integration, conflict and change. Today globalization implies not only the emergence of a new object of study, the world as such, but requires that any specific study be framed in a global context, since each part of the world is increasingly interdependent with many others and the world as such is increasingly present in all of its parts. The contemporary world looks more and more like a laser beam hologram, where every point contains the information of the whole, since each human being increasingly tends to consume information and resources coming from everywhere. Hence there is the need to shift the level of analysis at the global level and to take a world system perspective in any study. The study of world society and its relations with national and local social realities should become a central theme of research. The

higher the degree of interconnectedness of social relations at the world level, the greater the need to analyse the links between global social reality and multiple local social realities. 'Glocal' is an increasingly relevant neologism in our lexicon. At the cultural level we must analyse the many ways in which the unity and the diversity of the world combine and collide; at the social level we should investigate the many manifestations of complementarity and antagonism of social action in the global arena.

Second, the sovereign national state has been the key institution and the basic element of structuration of modern society. It is within this framework that the basic normative questions of non-violent regulation of conflict, social justice and individual freedom have been managed. With the erosion of sovereignty of the nation-state, a consequence of global interdependence, social structure has become less coherent than before. As Appadurai remarks, flows should be put at the centre of the analysis alongside structures – flows of people, technologies, ideas, symbols, capital, etc. Global flows are fast increasing, and the values, institutions and practices needed to manage them lag behind. The problems of legitimate power and conflict management and the question of the structuration of contemporary global society require institutions and normative elements besides national governments; but the conditions that make possible democratic accountability and social cohesion at the national level are more difficult to reproduce in the global context. We should address our attention to patterns of cooperation and conflict at the world level, to the new forms of normative order for a complex multicultural world, and to the emergence of multilayered types of governance through the institutional mixes of transnational actors.

Third, the old sociological question asked by Simmel, 'how is society possible?', is still central, but now must be asked at the world level, in addition to the local, regional, group and institutional levels, since the very forces favouring a more interconnected world stimulate counter-forces that foster division and fragmentation.

A Single System and a Fragmented World

The social world in the 21st century is both a single system and a fragmented world. Globalization is marked by the tension between global economic and technological interdependence and social interconnectedness, on the one hand, and cultural fragmentation and political division, on the other. The world can be conceptualized as a single system, but a world society does not exist yet, since there is no normative consensus reflected in commonly accepted institutions at the world level; and therefore global integration and governance should not be taken for granted.

Globalization is one of the most distinctive features of the contemporary

world. It has been defined in many complementary ways, as 'time–space compression' (Harvey, 1989), 'action at distance' (Giddens, 1990), 'accelerating interdependence' (Ohmae, 1990) and 'networking' (Castells, 1998). We can define it as a set of related processes that interconnect individuals, groups, communities, states, markets, corporations and international governmental and non-governmental organizations in complex webs of social relations; and, more synthetically, as the growth of networks of worldwide interdependence.

The impressive literature on globalization can be arranged in a conceptual space with reference to three major axes:

1. 'Hyperglobalizers vs sceptics', where the key distinction concerns the degree of novelty of globalization and its impact on nation-states;
2. 'Neoliberals vs neo-Marxist and radicals', where the key points are the balance between positive and negative impacts of globalization and its truly global or western hegemonic character; and
3. 'Homogenization vs heterogeneity and hybridization', which focuses on the cultural dimension of globalization.

Placing myself on the map, I tend to be far from the extremes, but appreciate more the novelty of the phenomenon than its continuity with the past. I consider globalization a multifaceted rather than a mostly economic process, I stress cultural heterogeneity and hybridization, and I conceive of it as an open process that, as with any major social transformation, constrains action, redistributes costs and benefits and reshapes patterns of inequality and opportunity.

Globalization is not just a continuation of the process of internationalization, but also a qualitatively different process. It is not just another phase in the long-standing cycle of openings and closures with free market and protectionist policies in the world economy. The difference lies in the combined effect of the rapid growth in communications and information technologies (computers, telecommunications and television) and in the increasing power of economic and financial transnational actors. More and more activities are organized on a world scale. The lives of individuals and the fates of communities increasingly depend on what takes place in distant places.

Both national and local borders are weakened and redefined through processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Whereas internationalization implies a limited and controlled erosion of sovereignty, insofar as each political entity autonomously decides whether to enter into relations of exchange with others, globalization implies a greater erosion of national sovereignty and a growing interconnectedness. Growing interconnectedness among peoples and states is shown by a variety of indicators, which range from the number and types of treaties

to international governmental institutions, from imports and exports to levels of investments, from electronic communications traffic to measures of the ethnic, religious and linguistic composition of national populations, and from military alliances to environmental risks.

Since the 16th century the world can be conceptualized as a single economic system, but it is only in recent decades that most people have become aware of living in the same world, mostly by virtue of global media. This awareness can be conceptualized in various ways: we can conceive of the planet Earth as an ecosystem; humanity as an endangered species, with related concern for the lives of future generations; the peoples of the world as a single constituency of individuals entitled to equal rights and responsibilities, and to whom decision-makers must be accountable; the world market as an economic space regulated by an international *lex mercatoria* that can guarantee not only investors' rights, but also workers', consumers' and communities' rights.

However, considering the world as a single system does not imply that a world society exists. A society is a de facto network of social relations with mutual expectations, for which a de jure normative consensus – reflected in commonly accepted institutions – can be present at different degrees to be ascertained empirically. Following Lockwood's distinction between 'system integration' and 'social integration', we can argue that at the world level the growing economic interdependence and social interconnectedness are accompanied by persistently high degrees of political fragmentation and cultural heterogeneity.

The discussion about the existence of a world community is in a similar vein (Brown, 1995). The creation of one world, that is, the notion that the world is becoming more closely linked or integrated by common forces and practices, is a necessary condition for the emergence of a world community, but it is not a sufficient condition. If society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage (Rawls, 1971), should we expect the emergence of a worldwide sense of community now that this cooperative venture is becoming worldwide in scope? This sense can be specified in terms of four basic types of consciousness: the anthropological consciousness that recognizes unity in our diversity, the ecological consciousness that recognizes our singular human nature within the biosphere, the civic consciousness of our common responsibilities and solidarity, and the dialogical consciousness that refers both to the critical mind and to the need for mutual understanding (Morin, 1999). Today a transnational civil society, an international public space and a growing awareness of our common fate as human beings are taking shape, but a global communitarian culture is far from being achieved.

Sceptics argue that it cannot be achieved, since any sense of common identity and solidarity actually requires the existence of others with whom

one does not identify, a distinction between them and us. Other scholars add that it is not even a desirable outcome. They argue that a more realistic portrait of the world today is as an association of communities founded on the rule of law but not united in any global project, or in other words, an international society as a practical association (Nardin, 1983). According to this approach the practical association of autonomous entities is not only a more realistic but also a more desirable option than that provided by global projects because the latter tend to be dominated by some powerful actor.

It is indisputable that we no longer live in a world of discrete civilizations, as at the time of the Han Empire and the Roman Empire, nor in the Westphalian order of an international society of states. Instead, we live in a fundamentally interconnected global order, integrated by complex patterns of exchange, hierarchy and community among multiple global actors, who are increasingly aware of their interdependence and common fate. But this does not mean we can take for granted the existence of a world society or a worldwide community.

Global integration and global governance are problematic questions. I address them from a sociological perspective, discussing three basic principles of organization (exchange, authority and solidarity) and the related institutional actors (markets, government organizations and communities) as mechanisms of social integration and governance of the world system.

The Essential Principles and Institutions of Social Integration and Social Regulation

The essential principles of social integration and social regulation – that is, modes by which activities are coordinated, resources are allocated and conflicts are structured – are authority or hierarchical control, exchange or coordination in the form of transactions, and solidarity or normative integration.

Each of these principles has historically come to be identified with different institutions, according to the level of analysis and the type of social system considered. Authority has generally been considered as the constitutive principle of the state and other public and private forms of government and bureaucratic organizations. Exchange is the constitutive principle of the various types of markets, and solidarity is the constitutive principle of the various forms of community (whether of the traditional type, such as family or clan, or the newer types, such as collective movements).

The identification of principles of integration and regulation with the traditional institutions with which they have been associated (that is,

authority with the nation-state, exchange with the market and solidarity with the community) is a useful simplification, but it also risks ignoring cases where a social relation is integrated or a given institution is regulated by either a different principle from the one usually associated with it, or a mix of principles, as often happens. For instance, the state is the organization that enjoys a monopoly of legitimate coercion and exercises binding authority over a people and a territory, but it is at the same time a community of citizens based on solidarity and reciprocity. Markets are not only the realm of exchange relations, but also of asymmetrical relations of power. Corporations can be analysed both as institutions that internalize market functions and as hierarchical organizations. Families and clans can be seen as forms of community where both exchange and authority relations are at work.

Markets

Markets are the institutional embodiment of the exchange principle. A market system is a system of society-wide coordination of human activities, not by central command but by mutual interactions in the form of transactions (Lindblom, 2001). Markets are major integrative institutions, but they are not spontaneous orders. Social integration also requires institutions of legitimate authority as well as communities. Not all social relations are exchange relations, and not all human action can be analysed in terms of rational action. Markets are socially constructed entities that need regulation. The capitalist market in particular, the most dynamic and innovative form of market, needs to be 'tamed' and harnessed in order to control its disruptive effects on social cohesion.

Because of their importance, international markets have become the object of intense ideological struggle that often obscures their real structures and ways of functioning. In the confrontation between global market fundamentalism and anti-global fundamentalism, the market is always either good or bad, whereas in reality it can have ambivalent effects, both integrative and disruptive, according to the institutional context in which it is embedded and, specifically, a particular combination of competition and regulation. Protectionist policies are generally a rather ineffective strategy for growth, but state laws and regulations aiming at setting standards for labour and land and for the quality of goods and services are basic ingredients of any strategy of sustainable development. The 'fine-tuned market' can be considered a socially integrating institution.

International markets shape new patterns of hierarchy and inequality and new forms of inclusion and exclusion, which cut across national borders and penetrate all societies and regions of the world. They threaten existing forms of social cohesion. The traditional core–periphery

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geographical hierarchy goes increasingly together with the social and ethnic inequalities in the world's major cities. On the other hand, international markets increase the freedom of choice of individuals and groups, open new opportunities for development, and contribute to integration through productive interdependence and the spread of similar consumption standards. The fact that young people everywhere seem to desire the same electronic games or the same jeans can be read as an instance of global market imperialism, but certain consumption items, including both educational and health services as well as fashionable games and dress distinctive of a world youth culture, can be seen as 'citizenship consumption', in the sense of fostering the notion of the right of equal access to desired goods for people of different countries. Moreover, the threat of homogenization and disempowerment coming from the global marketplace led and controlled by American business has been exaggerated. Consumers retain far more opportunities for personal creativity and autonomy than is often suggested. The exposure to foreign goods, symbols ands meanings generally enriches rather than narrows the local cultural repertoire by extending the opportunity to express indigenous lifestyles. The result is the creation of alternative and hybrid forms. Consuming the same types of goods provides a sense of equal opportunities, while reinterpreting them in terms of local cultures fosters a sense of autonomous identity.

The mixed blessing and curse of international markets, as with any type of market, depends very much on the form and degree of regulation. I share the view of Amartya Sen (1999), according to whom markets are mechanisms of social interaction through which individuals can pursue mutual advantage, provided that they operate in the appropriate legal and cultural context. The role of markets does not depend only on what they can do, but on what they are allowed to do. Powerful interest groups try to achieve monopoly control, since, as Adam Smith already argued, the interest of the businessman is always that of enlarging his market and restricting the competition. Laws and public policies are therefore necessary in order to avoid asymmetrical advantages for the strongest and the blocking of information, but most of all to promote the generalization of opportunities that markets offer for individual empowerment and social welfare. In the same vein, de Soto (2000) argues that the success of capitalism in the West can be traced to the connection between markets and laws, i.e. to the development of an institutional culture that sets rules for the exercise of property rights and the production and distribution of wealth.

The question is whether the connection between markets and laws is possible at the world level. The harmonization of laws, that is the adoption of national laws to bring local and national practices into compliance with

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international agreements; the informal development of a body of trans-national civil and commercial law in which judges in one country can base their decisions on precedents and case law from other countries; the growth of international regimes and global informal policy networks; freely signed pacts like the Global Compact – these are all ways in which market regulation can take place. Yet the degree of political fragmentation and market segmentation is still such that the behaviour of global corporate actors is often unchecked.

The formation of a tendentially global market develops potentialities that were present from the start in capitalism as a world system. However, in previous stages, capitalism developed predominantly within the context of national economies and societies. Sovereign states were able to tame and regulate the inherent vitality and tumultuous course of capitalist growth through regulative and distributive policies. In the different capitalisms of Western Europe, North America and Japan, different mixes of such policies took place. In the US laws mostly aimed at preserving competition through anti-trust laws and safeguarding the rights of investors and consumers, while in the countries of the European Union reformist policies were the result of the inclusion of the working class into the democratic polity and the development of the welfare state. In other words, in Europe labour parties 'exchanged' their loyalties to democratic institutions for the acquisition of political citizenship (voting rights) and social citizenship (welfare). In Japan's 'patronage capitalism', it was the mix of responsible leadership and employee loyalty at the firm level that controlled the more negative effects of capitalist relations.

In today's global society, these processes are difficult to replicate, since there is no equivalent of the nation-state at the world level to implement anti-trust, labour and environmental laws, or fiscal policies like the Tobin tax on financial transactions, in order to regulate capitalist relations. Nor is there is an equivalent of democracy at the world level, in which disadvantaged social groups could exercise their voting rights and make their voices heard in policy-making by political leaders competing for their support.

Transnational and Multinational Corporations and International Financial Institutions

The world market today is only a global market in the making and is actually a combination of regional markets along with a larger number of transnational and multinational corporations (TNCs and MNCs) with their 'internal markets'. These corporations can be discussed as institutional instances of the exchange principle, since they operate as worldwide networks.

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TNCs and MNCs have implemented at the world level the model of corporate control analysed by historians and sociologists (Chandler, 1977; Fligstein, 1990). The large corporation acts as the 'visible hand' that integrates economic life by internalizing a large number of economic activities more efficiently than markets could do, through processes of coordination, standardization and routinization. In terms of our typology, however, TNCs and MNCs are also hierarchical organizations that operate on the basis of the authority principle. As such, they organize economic space according to an international division of labour and an international distribution of power; limit competition by setting barriers for new potential entrants; control technological innovations; and foster their own distinctive lifestyles and consumption models.

TNCs and MNCs are firms that organize global production and distribution networks, while generally maintaining a clear national base. They have been favoured by the growth of transnational capital markets and by the global web of information and communication technologies. Their number is in the tens of thousands and the number of their subsidiaries in the hundreds of thousands, and they account for about 70 percent of world trade and up to 30 percent of world output. The 100 largest among them employ about 6 million workers worldwide, account for 30 percent of total world sales of transnational and multinational firms, control about 20 percent of global foreign assets, and dominate such industries as oil, food, car, electronics, telecommunications, chemicals and pharmaceuticals (UNCTAD, various years). A significant part of a country's officially declared imports and exports may actually consist of the cross-border movement of components, semi-finished goods, production-related services and other exchanges between the various subsidiaries of foreign and locally based TNCs. Although the vast majority of them have a clear national base (Martinelli, 1979), their interest is global profitability. They have grown from local or national firms to become global concerns through the skilful use of foreign direct investments and technological breakthroughs in material and symbolic communication in order to exploit their competitive advantage on a world scale.

Global productive and distribution networks are by no means limited to large TNCs, but involve small and medium-sized firms as well, thanks to the opportunities global communications offer for financial markets and world trade. But the former have a clear competitive advantage, because they are not just operating within networks – they are networks themselves.

TNCs act according to the rules of international competition and the laws of the different countries in which they operate. Their attitude towards market competition is an ambivalent one: on the one hand, they pressure national governments and international organizations such as

the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to remove barriers to their goods and services and to the free circulation of capital; on the other hand, they continue to take advantage of the fragmentation of other markets, such as labour markets (allowing them to pay lower wages in countries where labour is poorly organized) and markets for natural resources (allowing them to avoid the costs of environmental protection in countries where ecological policies are not implemented).

Their impact on the economies and societies of the countries where they invest is equally ambivalent. On the one hand, TNCs introduce advanced technologies, organizational models and corporate strategies, and pay an average of 10 percent higher salaries than domestic firms. On the other, they exploit the fragmentation of markets for labour and natural resources, and their technologies, strategies and structures may not be appropriate to the needs of the local economy and society, particularly in less developed countries. While for anti-globalization movement activists all TNCs behave in the same way and are equally responsible for the evils of globalization, variations in corporate behaviours and attitudes can actually be identified in the relations between TNCs and host countries. Some corporations have a raider's attitude towards the human and natural resources of host countries, while others try to develop more stable and equitable relations (which are more likely wherever they confront effective governments and active unions and political movements). Some consider their stockholders as their only legitimate constituency and reject any other kind of regulation. Others are willing to recognize their responsibility vis-a-vis a plurality of stakeholders besides their stockholders and investors, such as workers, consumers, suppliers and subcontractors, local communities, national governments, environmental associations, etc., and develop devices for self-regulation, such as codes of conduct, social and environmental reports, which are subjected to evaluating bodies and rating procedures on a world scale.

In spite of different behaviours, however, most TNCs enjoy power without responsibility, since most of their decisions are accountable only to shareholders and not to all the other many individuals and groups affected by them.

Markets and other institutions that embody the principle of exchange, like TNCs, foster system integration at the global level by increasing interconnectedness and interdependence, but they are not spontaneous orders and cannot guarantee by themselves any kind of global governance, to say nothing of democratic accountable governance. In order to cope with this problem, we therefore have to turn to other institutions based on legitimate authority and solidarity.

Nation-States, International Organizations and Supranational Government

Nation-States

Integration of social systems also depends on institutions based on the authority principle. The institutional embodiment of political authority in modern society has been the nation-state, i.e. an impersonal and sovereign political entity with supreme jurisdiction over a clearly delimited territory and population, claiming a monopoly of coercive power, and enjoying legitimacy as a result of its citizens' support. As with other complex integrative institutions, the nation-state is not based on one principle only, insofar as it is both an organization and a community. It developed historically through the growth of a civil bureaucracy, an army and diplomacy, and through the formation of a nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991), resulting from the action of nationalist elites in the modernization process (Gellner, 1983) and capable of evoking primordial ethno-symbolic roots (Smith, 1986).

World system integration in the 20th century has been the result of social integration at the nation-state level, an array of bilateral and multilateral treaties, and an increasing web of intergovernmental organizations. The so-called 'Westphalian order', starting with the peace treaty that ended the 30 Years War and reaching its full articulation after the Napoleonic wars, was based on a few principles: the formal equality of sovereign territorial states that recognize no superior authority, nonintervention in the domestic affairs of other recognized states, and consent as the basis of international legal obligation, plus the establishment of some minimal rules of coexistence (Cassese, 1986).

In the Westphalian order there are a few basic differences between the domestic and foreign realms: democracy within nation-states and nondemocratic relations among states; the entrenchment of accountability and democratic legitimacy within state boundaries and the pursuit of the national interest (and maximum political advantage) outside those boundaries; democracy and citizenship rights for those regarded as 'insiders' and the frequent negation of these rights for those on the outside (Held et al., 1999).

In contemporary global politics all of these basic distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred. Today, the international society of states is becoming an interconnected global order, where people, goods, services, money, knowledge, news, images, beliefs, lifestyles, weapons, crime, drugs and pollutants rapidly move across territorial boundaries.

Globalization tends to erode the basis of sovereignty and autonomy of nation-states. This is ironic, since the 20th century was, among other things, the century of the proliferation of nation-states as the fundamental

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form of political organization. Hyperglobalists of different ideological orientation have exaggerated the demise of the nation-state and should be criticized for not distinguishing among states with quite different levels of power and influence. But the erosion, loss or diminution of state autonomy and sovereignty is real, both imposed by global interconnectedness and given away through the partial concession of sovereignty to supranational institutions like the EU. It is uneven, since states differ very much in terms of economic, political, military and cultural power. But, as the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 against the US dramatically showed, even the most powerful state in the world is unable to perform as basic a task of a sovereign state as the control of its frontiers. And how could it? In one year, 475 million people, 125 million vehicles and 21 million import shipments come into the country at 3700 terminals in 301 ports of entry. It takes five hours to inspect a fully loaded 40-foot shipping container, and more than 5 million enter each year. In addition, more than 2.7 million undocumented immigrants have simply walked or ridden across the Mexican and Canadian borders in recent years. A terrorist can easily slip in, and it is easier to bring a few pounds of a deadly biological or chemical agent than to smuggle in the tons of illegal heroin or cocaine that arrive annually. The only way for the Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to cope with such flows is to reach beyond the national borders through intelligence and cooperation within the jurisdiction of other states, and to rely on private corporations to develop transparent systems for tracking international commercial flows so that enforcement officials can conduct virtual audits of inbound shipments before they arrive. Thus custom officers work throughout Latin America to assist businesses in the implementation of security programmes that reduce the risk of being exploited by drug smugglers, and cooperative international mechanisms are being developed for policy trade flows. The sovereign state adapts, but in doing so it transforms the meaning and exclusivity of governmental jurisdiction. 'Legal borders do not change, but they blur in practice' (Nye, 2002).

Because of the multifaceted impact of globalization, nation-states are undergoing a deep transformation, as their functions and powers are rearticulated and re-embedded in complex transnational, regional and local networks. Global flows stimulate a variety of adjustment strategies through national policies that require a rather active state – neither the neoliberal minimum government nor the waning state of the hyperglobalizers, but the 'developmental' or 'catalytic' state. As an illustration, we might cite the competition among national governments through industrial policies aimed at creating the most favourable conditions for foreign investment (friendly corporate law and fiscal policy, good infrastructures, flexible labour force, efficient public administration, etc.), while at the

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same time maintaining control over basic development strategies. We can therefore agree with Rosenau (1997) that the state is not demised, but rather reconstructed and restructured, and with Keohane (1995) that sovereignty is less a territorially defined barrier than a resource for a politics characterized by complex transnational networks of competitive country systems and regional systems. National sovereignty is increasingly challenged by transnational forces, but nation-states will remain key actors in global governance for quite a long time.

Overstressing the erosion of state powers risks obscuring two questions that are very relevant for global governance and the question of power and authority. The first question concerns the fact that most of the policies that can regulate and control market processes can be effectively implemented only at the national level. The role of the judiciary in pursuing illegal market behaviour – as in the Enron case – and the role of policy in reducing the inequality of opportunities and controlling undesirable outcomes of market processes – as in the unemployment provisions of several advanced countries – are effective only at the state level or, at most, at the EU supranational level. In this respect the nation-state is still very relevant, although changing.

The second question concerns the contested hegemony of the United States in the present world system, which I only mention here. The relations of domination and cooperation between a core superpower, regional powers and the various peripheral states (some with neocolonial relations) should be accounted for in any discussion of world integration and global order and governance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US is the only superpower with the military and economic might required to guarantee world governance, but it does not have legitimate authority. Hence the provocative proposal of Ohmae, one of the hyper-globalizers, who suggests that all citizens of the world be given the right to take part in the election of the American president. The US may have the power to exert leadership, but its leadership can hardly be considered as legitimate by, and accountable to, constituencies outside those of the hegemonic power and its allies. Global governance can only be multi-layered if it is to be effective, and can only be democratic in order to be accepted, as I argue later on.

International Organizations

In today's world there is an impressive web of international governmental organizations (IGOs). Their number increased six-fold in the 20th century, while the number of annual conferences and congresses sponsored by them has grown from a handful to more than 400,000. The UN system and the other autonomous IGOs like the World Trade Organization, together with international regimes, are far from constituting a world

government (although they restrain the sovereign power of member states, they lack the monopoly of legitimate violence), and even farther from constituting a democratic world government. However, they do contribute to global governance and integration, insofar as they have increased their focus on collective policy problems of economic, ecological and social security, rather than on the traditional geopolitical relations of states, and fostered the growth of a polyarchic, mixed-actor system of global politics (mostly through the Security Council and the various agencies acting in various fields – from health to food, from preserving cultural heritage to industrial development, from drug control to peace-keeping).

IGOs are often used by the most powerful global actors to pursue their own interests and perspectives, but they also provide a forum for other actors to be heard, give voice to minorities, and uphold, at least to some extent, the principles for which they have been established (e.g. peace, development, human rights).

The system of IGOs has greatly developed both in quantitative and qualitative ways and has undergone major changes, but in the new 'post-Westphalian' context, it still looks inadequate. Since the 19th century there have been many multilateral treaties for the common regulation either of goods that belong to no one (or everyone), such as the high seas and air, or of activities that connect and integrate peoples and institutions belonging to different states, such as transportations and mail. A further step has been the creation of international institutions performing new tasks of common interest such as the International Telegraphic Union (1865), or those stemming from the League of Nations (formed in 1920), such as the International Court of Justice. The United Nations Organization was created in 1945 with more ambitious goals than the League of Nations: the maintenance of peace and international security, the solution of basic world problems through international cooperation, and the promotion and defence of basic human rights. Besides its specialized bureaus (the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, etc.), the UN is at the centre of a complex system of autonomous specialized institutions, some pre-existing, such as the ILO (International Labour Office), the World Bank, or the IMF, but mostly created by the UN, such as UNESCO and the World Health Organization, all related to and integrated into the UN system via specific agreements.

The UN system was designed for the world of international relations among sovereign states and is the result of a compromise between the principle of equal democratic representation for all states in the General Assembly, openly and collectively regulating international life, and the realpolitik of power relations that have given veto power to the big five

major powers in the Security Council, virtually immobilizing the UN on several urgent issues.

In spite of its limitations, and in spite of complex negotiation procedures, lack of resources, waste of resources and veto powers, the UN has achieved results. And it has provided alternative principles of global governance to those of traditional geopolitics, based on collective decision-making among governments and non-governmental organizations and the goal of consensual solutions to international problems.

The UN system needs basic reforms in order to become more effective and more legitimate. The UN Charter contains the premises for such reforms, but is still the expression of the unresolved conflict between two alternative principles of world affairs. However, reform is needed, and several proposals are today under discussion. Among them are the creation of a Global Civil Society Forum that would grant voting power on specific policy issues to transnational actors other than nation-states, and the formation of an Assembly of the World's Peoples that would be entitled, together with the General Assembly, to elect the Security Council. The advantages of this type of proposals are the fostering of identities other than those related to nation-states and the spreading of democratic voting procedures (required for electing representatives to the Assembly of the World's Peoples) to countries with authoritarian regimes.

The role of IGOs with respect to the world market, both those within the UN system like the World Bank and the IMF, and those related to it, like the WTO, is more controversial. The World Bank guarantees loans for specific investment projects in infrastructures, energy, transports, agricultural and industrial development, and more recently education, population control and urban development as well. Its record is a controversial one: it has provided significant aid to countries like India, Brazil, Mexico and Pakistan, but it has also responded mostly to US governments. The IMF intervenes in financial crises of state budgets, granting loans that are subordinated to the acceptance of specific economic policy rules by the receiving governments. The policies of the IMF in forcing fiscal orthodoxy on developing nations are favoured by the fact that not many nation-states possess either the competence or the power to compete with it. Such international bodies are not controlled by democratic processes similar to those available within a democratic nation-state; as Lindblom argues, they are far removed from voters, but are easily accessible to corporations (Lindblom, 2001: 241). As demonstrated by the Argentine case (where the IMF, together with domestic corruption, can be seen as a major cause of the crisis), IMF-supported policies may respond to foreign lenders' and investors' interests, but not necessarily to the needs and expectations of other social groups within the country.

A special position is that of the WTO, the only transnational institution

endowed with a coercive power, i.e. the coercive power of regulating disputes. The WTO evolved from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), extending its scope from industrial goods to agriculture, services, intellectual property and information technologies. The WTO has been criticized, like the World Bank and the IMF, for taking decisions strongly influenced by the most powerful countries and in accordance with the ideology of market fundamentalism. On the other hand, it has been praised for setting standards of commercial performance and for contributing to the economic growth of less developed countries.

Closely related to IGOs are other transnational regulatory authorities such as international regimes, which play an increasingly influential role. International regimes are implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area of international relations, issues as diverse as nuclear testing, radio frequencies, high seas fishing and satellite orbits. Several among them can be seen as functional equivalents of markets, insofar as they regulate the supply and distribution of goods and services, contribute to the growing institutionalization of global politics, and constitute forms of global governance, distinct from the traditional notion of national sovereignty. Some have been in existence for a long time, while others are quite recent. But what is new is their constantly expanding number and importance. Several international regimes have at their core one or more intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the global regime for the international transport system has at its core the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Air Transport Association), but many are based on more fluid arrangements, arising from specific treaties, collective policy problems or transnational communities of interest (e.g. the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation is built on an international treaty combined with regular international conferences). One specific type of international regimes comprise the international commercial arbitrations and security and bond ratings agencies like Moody's and Standard and Poor's. With their huge bodies of professional analysts scattered in various regions of the world, they can exercise more influence on the policy-making of a given country than foreign governments or domestic interest groups.

International regimes foster the formation of transnational communities of interests and policy networks that connect government officials in similar departments with members of given IGOs and NGOs. They shape a system of 'governance without government', as Rosenau (1997) has argued. The result is that national governments are inserted into a growing system of global, regional and multilateral systems of governance, and that legal processes and national legislations are increasingly enmeshed in international rules. The very existence of the human rights

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regime implies an attack on the sovereignty of nation-states and is seen by many governments as an intrusion into their internal affairs.

To summarize, international governmental institutions like those of the UN system or the World Bank contribute to integrating world society by applying the authority principle in global governance, but like transnational corporations and banks, make momentous decisions under little democratic control. The problem is to render their authority more legitimate and their decision-making more accountable and transparent. But how can democratic control over international institutions be achieved? It can hardly be through an 'electorate' of several billion people with diverse aspirations and understandings, which selects a world government within a reformed UN system. A world government is at present utopian. Global governance, as multilayered governance, however, is not, and it can be achieved through the diffusion of political authority both above and below the nation-state level. Below, this might happen through the empowerment of self-governing communities according to the principle of subsidiarity; above, it might proceed through the development of regional supranational governments like the EU.

The EU as a Model of Supranational Government

The EU and similar types of supranational unions can provide a significant contribution to global democratic governance, insofar as they create mechanisms of collaboration in several policy arenas, introduce new instruments of human rights enforcement, and pool resources for achieving common goals through the willing surrender by member states of portions of their sovereignty.

European integration proceeded at an uneven pace, and recurrent crises were overcome through enlarging it and extending the functional areas of cooperation and policy harmonization The EU has been more the fulfilment of the project of enlightened elites rather than of mass collective movements, but the success of the common European market has gained the support of most citizens of the member states. The creation of the monetary union and the single currency have advanced the process of integration, but the question of the political union cannot be further deferred and must be addressed with political and sociological imagination, since the different economic and fiscal policies of the member states tend to paralyse action. Madison's dictum, 'federate their purse, their hearts and minds will follow', can be true, but it requires federal institutions that go beyond the present coordination of policies among national governments and it needs the full implementation of the majority vote in the Council of States in order to avoid the risk of paralysis in an enlarged EU with 25–30 member states. We can praise the solution of transferring functions such as the monetary function to a higher

decision-making level by member states willing to surrender some of their sovereignty. In so doing, the EU has made obsolete the conception of sovereignty as an indivisible, illimitable, exclusive and perpetual form of public power, embodied within an individual state. But the recently formed Convention (which includes both representatives of the parliaments and of the governments of member states) will have to specify better the competencies and responsibilities at the various government levels (federal, national and subnational), since the transfer of government functions to a higher level requires a transfer of power too, to the democratic institutions of a supranational state, and to introduce changes which can cope with the present democratic deficit of EU institutions.

The debate today is between the supporters of the nation-states and the supporters of a federal model. Like the latter, I am persuaded that European peoples have an interest in developing the present supranational entity into a true federal union, but this can be achieved slowly and step by step, starting with the suppression of the rule of unanimous vote for major policy decisions and with the transfer at the EU level of foreign and defence policies. This institutional arrangement should include the components of a federal state, i.e. besides the existing European Court of Justice, there should be a parliament with one chamber elected by all EU citizens and a second chamber with members designated by the member states, as well as a government accountable to the parliament and endowed with true decision-making capacity.

The model of the EU should be a specific and novel one, both institutionally and culturally. It should be a supranational union where decisions are taken both by a body representing the governments of the member countries and regions (a reformed Council of heads of states and governments) and a body representing the peoples of the member countries and regions (a reformed Commission, whose members should be elected by the European Parliament). It should also be a multicultural entity with a core of shared values (democratic institutions, basic human rights, civic responsibilities, peaceful coexistence with all people on earth, free competition) that are at the foundations of its common institutions, together with the respect for different cultures, languages and heritages.

According to this model, unity should be achieved through diversity. Already in ancient Greek philosophy we find the notion of harmony stemming from contradictory elements. If one postulates unity at the beginning, it follows a tendency towards the continual coming back to the lost original model; if, on the contrary, one postulates diversity at the beginning, unity is seen as the continuous effort stemming from conflict and competition, never predetermined.

Unity should induce the redefinition of identities, both those of the European peoples and those of immigrants from other parts of the world,

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rather than impose their abolition. And citizens should share multiple identities – the city, the regional, the national and the supranational. However, the recognition of multiple cultural identities within a single state can be a destabilizing factor for national unity, since it alters the delicate balance between *ethnos* and *demos*.

The process of union building will, however, be helped by an increasingly homogeneous European social fabric and by the growth of a European public space. The strengthening of a common culture, I want to stress again, should not be seen as a means to exclude others, but rather as a necessary basis for the dialogue among civilizations.

If this project fails, it will provide support for the theory that nation-states continue to be built only upon either a homogeneous culture or a hegemonic culture capable of integrating immigrants into a melting pot. If the project succeeds, the EU can become a model for other regions of the world to form large supranational and multicultural unions, and thus can contribute significantly to global democratic governance.

In any case, we can already draw from the European experience a few basic lessons for the formation of supranational unions in other regions of the world:

1. The way to start is a series of intergovernmental treaties;
2. Common economic interests are a more viable way than defence or military goals (e.g. regional market integration overcomes competitive advantage logic, leading to a regional currency and monetary union);
3. A pooling of sovereignty must take place through the willing surrender of portions of national sovereignty by member national states;
4. The model of a supranational union cannot be that of the nation-state; and
5. Unity should be based on diversity and not achieved at the expense of diversity, but at the same time should be based on a distinctive model of development, such as the Asian model of ethnic networks vs the market logic.

Global Movements and Epistemic Communities

International Collective Movements

The principles of exchange and authority and their related institutions are powerful integrative mechanisms for social systems and motivating drives for human action, but they are not enough. A third basic principle, that of solidarity, is required. Although there are many institutional actors that operate largely according to this principle, I focus my attention on international collective movements and epistemic communities.

International collective movements are the heirs of the critical social

movements that developed on a national basis, such as the feminist, environmental and anti-war movements. They are engaged in mobilizing transnational communities of resistance and solidarity, taking advantage of the same technological resources that corporations use to control the market. Many are issue-oriented movements, but a loose general coordination is taking place. Since Seattle, the pictures of the anti-globalization movement organizing parallel summits of global society in the same place and time as major transnational institutions, like the IMF or the G8, have become familiar. In January 2001, the first World Social Forum was organized in Porto Alegre with about 20,000 participants, to be followed by another in the same place a year later.

The anti-globalization movement, where the more protectionist anti-global-market advocates join forces with the more internationally concerned ecologists, is in fact a rather heterogeneous family of movements kept together by the common adversary. The anti-globalization movement includes the farmers of the Confédération Paysanne and the landless Sem Terra, the organization for taxing international financial transactions (ATTAC), the association advocating debt forgiveness for poor countries (Drop the Debt), the Friends of the Earth, groups criticizing specific TNCs, labour and environmental policies like 'Justice, do it Nike' and the Clean Clothes Campaign, together with a variety of religious groups and some representatives of trade unions and leftist parties. Although networks like the Third World Network and the Network Lilliput have been formed for coordination and joint action, there are not only different views, but conflicting interests within the movement as well, as illustrated by the case of EU farmers supporting protectionist agricultural policies that harm the exports of poor countries.

Hoogvelt (1997) portrays stratification in the global society as a three-tier arrangement of concentric circles that cut across national boundaries, representing respectively the elites (who have decision-making power), the contented (who in various ways benefit from global interconnectedness) and the marginalized (who are either excluded or pay the costs). The anti-globalization movement draws its recruits from all three tiers – not only from those who are reluctant to pay the costs of the global market, but also from those who, although not marginalized themselves, speak in the name of the marginalized, and from those who, while benefiting from globalization, want to regulate it.

Some international collective movements are wholly against globalization, while others, like the advocates of sustainable development, seek to tame it. Some of them stress local identities, pursue protectionist policies and have a neo-populist appeal, differing from xenophobic parties only in their internationalist rhetoric. Others, to the contrary, express a universalistic planetary ideology, and defend the rights and

make claims in the name of those excluded and marginalized by poverty, illness, ignorance and the digital divide. The latter can be defined as 'ethical movements' and make heterogeneous demands, insofar as they express their worries over what seems to threaten the survival and dignity of the human species. They are important actors of global governance and their impact is magnified by the global media that report their protest at summits, but their legitimacy is no greater than that of other global actors, and their effectiveness is hampered by the lack of democratic institutions and processes at the world level. The absence of a world democratic polity, in fact, prevents them from following the path of protest movements in national democracies in the fight for legal, political and social citizenship.

This is not to say that the contemporary anti-globalization movement has only an expressive, non-instrumental character. In addition to pursuing concrete aims, such as debt forgiveness for poor countries and the reform of the WTO, it has developed a distinctive political culture that responds to the need for expressing new identities and defining new codes and languages to organize the flow of information. It expresses the 'Zeitgeist criticism against the excessive materialism and concentration of wealth and power in the North of the world which leads to the poverty of the South' (Vayrynen, 1999). The protesters are informed by moral values, such as social justice, environmental protection, human rights and democratic participation, and raise their voices against exploitation, because, as Bauman writes, 'the price of silence is paid in the hard currency of human suffering'.

As a diffuse movement arising from and giving form to multiple political and cultural meanings, anti-globalization has become an alternative to established party politics and traditional social movements, both of which are more instrumental in nature. The latter also act in global politics. Alongside traditional internationals, such as the socialist and the Christian democratic, which try to coordinate their political behaviour both in the national and international political arenas, there are transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink, 1998) that do not pursue expressive politics, but instead aim to produce concrete results in specific contexts: they oppose human rights violations, the marketing of baby formula to poor women, the social and environmental disruption of dam construction, etc.

International Scientific Associations as Epistemic Communities

Collective movements are not the only communitarian actors in world politics. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and transnational communities are two other important types that play relevant roles in global governance. I only briefly describe these and then

concentrate on epistemic communities as the most relevant case on this occasion. The number of INGOs has increased much more than that of IGOs, passing from less than 300 at the beginning of the 20th century to several thousand a century later. A growing sociological literature studies their origins, ways of functioning, strategies and various impacts. Some of them, like Amnesty International, the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace, challenge governments and win wide support across national borders. They represent effective pressure groups vis-a-vis global decision-makers who are not accountable to larger constituencies. Others are less visible, but play key roles in international cooperation and in the formation of a global civil society and public space. Many INGOs have soft power, given that for many domestic policy issues, from human rights to the environment, INGOs are in fact the driving force of the decision-making process and attract citizens into coalitions that bypass national boundaries.

A growing sociological literature on transnational communities is also now available. This mostly deals with immigrant communities and cultural and ethnic diasporas that identify with the cultures of both the sending and the receiving national societies, and which have strong transformative effects in the direction of cultural hybridization. But other types of transnational communities are relevant as well, like the migratory elites active in various domains, such as international organizations, transnational corporations, professional sports and voluntary relief agencies. These elites are globally educated, can work anywhere, are directly connected to the global level, and lack both representation and accountability to any specific demos. They both foster and help to address the problems of global integration and governance.

International scientific associations are among those NGOs and transnational communities that can contribute the most to global democratic governance, and play a countervailing role to economic and cultural domination, for a variety of reasons, some of which are common to all international scientific associations and some specific to those in the social sciences.

First, most influential global actors, such as governments, MNCs and religious fundamentalist or nationalist movements, orient their conduct to self-interest (the increase of power or profit) and tend to impose a unique Weltanschauung. International scientific associations also act according to self-interest, insofar as they try to enhance the worldwide prestige and influence of a given professional collectivity, that of the educators and researchers, and of specific disciplinary subgroups, like biologists or engineers. However, the key principles of their action are universalistic values, on the basis of which everyone is evaluated in terms of her or his scientific achievement, teaching ability and professional ethics, and not in terms of gender, ethnicity, age or nationality.

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Second, international scientific associations can be an effective antidote against dogmatism and bigotry. In our scholarly work we are accustomed to confront our hypotheses and views with different and even conflicting ones, and to submit contrary opinions to a fair evaluation in terms of both logical consistency and empirical testing. Contextual universalism, an approach that is suggested for intercultural dialogues, finds many instances of application in scientific debates.

Third, whereas the conveniences of trade or the requirements of diplomacy often persuade governments and corporations to close one eye – or even both – when faced with violations of basic human rights, international scientific associations can be much more outspoken and explicit in the defence of those rights. They can effectively defend the freedom of thought, speech, teaching and scientific enquiry. Authoritarian governments, accustomed to disregard their domestic public opinion, are more vulnerable when confronted by international protest campaigns, which have been strengthened in the age of global networking.

Fourth, international scientific associations in general, and those of the social sciences in particular, seem better equipped than other actors to cope with the problems of hegemonic cultures and languages in the world today. As social scientists we are more aware that language is a fundamental identity factor, that our language circumscribes our sociological imagination, and that we must develop empathy. As the report of the Bureau of International Sociology states, 'the acknowledgement of the role of language in the development of individual and collective identities must be rendered compatible with sociology's search for universality'. And as Wallerstein (1998) remarks, 'we are condemned to analyzing everything in its contradiction as simultaneously an expression of the universal and representative of the irremediably particular'. The relevance of the comparative method in sociological research and the basic contributions of historians and anthropologists makes all of us aware of the risks of ethnocentrism and reinforces our need for cultural hybridization, without losing confidence in our quest for generalizations about social actions, relations and structures.

Fifth, international scientific associations in the social sciences can help global governance by enriching the public discourse at the world level through intellectually honest and skilful analyses of the different dimensions of globalization. Social scientists are always torn between the need to free themselves from the conditioning pressures of powerful ideologies and interest groups, on the one hand, and the quest for useful knowledge, on the other.

Although participation in social science associations has increased over time and become more global, the infrastructure designed to support them remains weaker than that designed primarily to support the natural

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sciences. There are fewer large-scale international programmes; the most important are the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change and the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, both started in the 1980s.

We need today a development similar to that which occurred after the Second World War, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created with the strong belief that the development of social science and international collaboration among social scientists could contribute to the promotion of peace, social justice and human dignity. The formal infrastructure to support and promote international collaboration in the social sciences thus received a major push. The original goals of the International Sociological Association (i.e. knitting together social scientists around the world in order to increase international understanding, developing social scientific knowledge to benefit humankind, and promoting research in fields crucial to the establishment of a peaceful world order) have become even more important today, and they are far from fully achieved.

Our association can do a lot concretely to foster the creation of global communities of scholars, the development of truly international comparative research projects, the promotion of exchange programmes for professors and students, the improvement of research and teaching facilities in less developed countries, and the learning of different languages and cultures.

From System Integration to Democratic Global Governance

Global institutional actors have different and often conflicting interests and identities, but they all serve to connect and integrate, and in so doing foster complex patterns of world governance. The specific kind of integration and governance that will prevail depends on the number, type, relative power and different resources that can be mobilized by the various actors whose pursuit of their goals impinges on transnational rule and authority systems.

There are in fact quite different possible forms of global integration and governance. The integration of world society can be achieved through domination and exploitation, by violent means and the repression of rights, and can result in growing injustice. Or, on the contrary, it can be coherent with the beliefs that human rights, the development of individual capabilities and community empowerment, good health and educational standards, environmental protection and sustainable development for all people and countries are common goals for all members of a world society in the making; and that they should be

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achieved through the non-violent regulation of the inevitable conflicts and through dialogue among – and not the clash of – civilizations.

Democratic global governance does not equate to the notion of world government, which is today still largely utopian, but it does imply the notion of world leadership, and it raises the questions of this leadership's legitimation and accountability. As a matter of fact, world leadership has been exerted by hegemonic powers, as in the case of Great Britain in the 19th-century 'concert of nations', or the US and the USSR in the decades after the Second World War, or the US today. But in these cases, leadership can hardly be considered as legitimate by, or accountable to, constituencies outside those of the hegemonic power and its allies. World leadership is also to some extent the outcome of international organizations and the UN system, but these are accountable only to member governments.

The key question of whether global governance can take a democratic form requires a preliminary definition of democracy. Liberal internationalists, on the one hand, argue that in order to cope with the threats to social cohesion and the ecological and political risks of contemporary globalization, it is necessary to extend the model of liberal democracy beyond national borders into the world arena. The Commission on Global Governance (1995), for instance, calls for 'the articulation of a collaborative ethos based upon the principles of consultation, transparency and accountability of decision making among all actors either involved and/or affected in global decision making (states, corporations, collective movements)'.

Radicals, on the other hand, argue for alternative mechanisms of global social and political organization based on the principles of self-governing communities (Falk, 1995) and of people's empowerment in order to control their own lives. Critical social movements that developed on a national base, such as the feminist, environmental and anti-war movements, generally espouse the radical view. These movements are engaged in fostering new international identities and notions of global citizenship, taking advantage of the same technologies that corporations use to control the market.

A more viable project of global governance should try to integrate the most promising elements of both views. This notion of global governance that I wish to stress defines a complex set of norms and institutions concerning the organization and the regulation of social and economic life at the world level. It conceives of the world as a single system and the peoples of the world as a single constituency of individuals endowed with equal rights and responsibilities and to whom decision-makers must be accountable. It is the outcome of diverse strategies in a polyarchic,

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mixed-actor system, and it focuses on democratic accountability, individual and community empowerment, multiple identities, contextual universalism and supranational institutions.

Is such a system possible? Several political and cultural trends in contemporary world society have negative implications for achieving the project of democratic global governance that I have outlined. First, the most powerful actors on the world stage usually address matters of common concern in terms of their own specific goals and interests, i.e. the interests of what they consider to be their constituencies (such as national interests for state powers, profits and capital gains for TNCs, and dogmatic beliefs for fundamentalist movements), with the result that old inequalities and hierarchies are consolidated while new ones are fostered, and basic human rights are violated.

Second, the strategies of international organizations – which by definition should have global constituencies – are often weighted in favour of their most powerful members (such as the Security Council members in the UN or the members of the G8). These first two tendencies lead to charges that global governance is a western project designed to spread a kind of *pensée unique* of western values, laws and institutional arrangements, and to sustain the richest countries' primacy in world affairs.

Third, the emergence of new forms of fundamentalism, aggressive nationalism and tribalism – which construct people's identities upon primordial ties and dogmatic beliefs – inhibits the growth of democratic citizenship, both at the national and the supranational levels. In today's world we are witnesses to numerous instances of the perversion of local identities, in terms of dogmatic closure, intolerances and prejudice, as a reaction to global trends. Fundamentalist religious faiths and dogmatic ideological beliefs deny the tension between the cultural message and the specific cultural code through which the message is spread, and pretend to monopolize the message, preaching irreducible truths. But in so doing they reduce the message's reach, tie it to a specific time and space, and make intercultural dialogue impossible.

Fourth, the declining participation in democratic politics and the reduced confidence in democratic processes and institutions in the developed countries with representative governments, as shown by many opinion polls – weaken the appeal of democracy and make it more difficult to 'export' beyond national boundaries and to developing countries with authoritarian regimes. The growing popularity of neo-populist forms of consensus formation, which appeal to many 'losers' in the globalization process, and the increasing reliance on technocratic elites, which appeals to many 'winners', both reduce the space for democratic participation and accountability. Neo-populist trends of local closure and

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xenophobic fear of different peoples and cultures have found renewed life among political entrepreneurs in several western democracies, including France, Austria, Italy and the Netherlands.

Fifth, the persistence of authoritarian regimes that repress civil rights and political liberties in many developing countries does not contribute to strengthening the voices in favour of democratic accountability at the global level. Authoritarian leaders of several developing countries reject any critique to their rule as undue foreign interference and attempts to impose western hegemony. They also often counter the 'formal' rules of democracy with the 'substantial' democracy of their achievements for the well-being of their peoples. In fact, division of powers, due process of law, multipartyism and electoral competition, freedom of speech and free information, are not instances of western ethnocentrism, but essential ingredients of democratic life, which can be identified in different historical and cultural traditions and which must be generalized at the world level.

And finally, the virtuous circle of democratization that took place within the context of the nation-state can hardly be reproduced at the world level. In the historical experience of the developed countries, markets, governments and communities interacted in the formation of democratic governance and social integration. As I argued earlier, sovereign states were able to tame and regulate the inherent vitality and tumultuous course of capitalist growth through regulative and distributive policies. In the global world of today there is no equivalent of the nation-state at the world level that could implement fiscal and welfare policies, anti-trust controls or labour and environmental laws aimed at regulating capitalist relations. Nor is there a world independent judiciary which can control and sanction illegal behaviour. Nor is there a democratic polity at the world level, in which exploited or disadvantaged social groups could exchange their loyalty to democratic institutions for equal rights of legal, political and social citizenship, and could make their voices heard through their votes for political decision-makers competing for their support.

And yet the project of democratic global governance is not impossible. Major factors favouring this project and counterbalancing the impact of its 'enemies' are:

1. The growing awareness of a common fate, such as poverty and unemployment, disease and pollution, terrorism and ethnic cleansing – and the ensuing need to find common solutions and responses based on a culture of dialogue and cooperation;
2. The emergence of a transnational civic society and an international public space, with international scientific institutions playing a significant role in a dialogue among civilizations; this intercultural dialogue

requires the weakening of the link between ethos and ethnos, between a given vision of the world and practical knowledge, on the one hand, and the belonging to a specific community of fate, on the other; and the spread of self-reflexive action and thought;

3. The diffusion of the notion of multiple citizenship through which different overlapping identities (local, national, regional and cosmopolitan) can define different sets of rights and responsibilities;

4. The growth of the cultural attitude of contextual universalism, i.e. the fertile and non-destructive encounter of cultures and the according of mutual respect among different cultural outlooks, along the lines developed by authors like Robertson (1992) and Beck (1997).

These trends, which are growing albeit very unevenly, can in turn reinforce existing processes of global governance and make possible new ones. Among the existing processes are: the harmonization of national laws in matters regulated by international agreements or resulting from court decisions taken in a different country; the strengthening of international regimes; the solutions to specific problems suggested by thematic networks; and the international standards of good practices.

Among the new institutional processes which constitute basic building blocks of global governance are:

1. The specification of rules of coexistence that are coherent with shared principles (starting with the UN declarations of universal human rights), and of procedures for making decision-making processes with global implications accountable;

2. The articulation of a cooperative ethos based on principles of transparency and accountability and the practice of periodical consultations with all actors involved in and affected by decisions with global implications;

3. The development of self-governing communities as alternative mechanisms of social and political organization at the world level, which will foster the empowerment of individuals and groups;

4. The strengthening of international regimes and supranational institutions of governance at the world level (through a transformed United Nations Organization) and at the regional level (through a reformed European Union and similar political entities in the other regions of the world); and

5. The spread and consolidation of regional supranational unions like the EU, with mechanisms of reinforced cooperation in public policy and the pooling of resources for common goals through the voluntary ceding of some sovereignty by member nation-states.

All of these elements can contribute to the advancement of a

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'cosmopolitan project' of global governance (Archibugi et al., 1998), in which sites and forms of power that at present operate beyond the scope of democratic control can be made more accountable to all those who are affected by their decisions.

Conclusion

In a world where a growing number of basic aspects of the human condition tend to escape any form of political regulation in the name of the imperatives of productive growth and global economic competitiveness, and where democratic politics is confined to the national level of a few dozen nation-states, global governance amounts to a few 'watchers' (regulatory regimes, international courts and scattered elements of an international *lex mercatoria*) that are often weak and not very legitimate (who will watch the watchers?). We need to construct a world citizenship and a global polity that submits to democratic rules and institutions. As concerned social scientists, we can and should cooperate in such a project.

For the first time in history, human beings are inserted in tendentially global social networks; productive systems and markets are coordinated at the world level; media images and messages reach masses of people all over the earth; informatics allows for interaction at a distance; and material and symbolic communications imply a compression of time and space. But there is no normative consensus that corresponds to all of this and is capable to fund widely agreed institutions of democratic global governance.

The social world of the 21st century will continue to be a fragmented world, but at the same time the institutions and rules of multilayered global governance will grow, together with the values of a cosmopolitan culture. The role of epistemic communities like the ISA, upholding the values of contextual universalism and critical self-reflexive knowledge, will be more important than ever.

Note

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