

Lecture 9

Global society

3 May 2006

Reorganising the world

- States are becoming only one among many different types of international, global actors (NGOs, IGOs, TNCs, etc.)
- Growing influence of global movements
- Various international meetings, summits, conferences on global governance and world politics
- Rising impact of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)

Global civil society

- = a realm of thousands voluntary non-governmental associations, movements and organisations that have a worldwide reach and appeal
- millions of ordinary people are prepared to ‘get involved’, to challenge the decisions that states or IGOs or TNCs make (→ antiglobalisation movements, antiglobalist activists)

Global civil society & global governance

- There is hope that political G (see Lecture 7) might bring about the emergence of democratic transnational social forces which would emanate from this growing sphere of global civil society
- This optimistic view hopes for the creation of a democratic global governance structure, even the emergence of a cosmopolitan democracy
- Less optimistic authors disagree (is global democracy even possible culturally? Would everyone agree on the basis in Western cosmopolitan ideals? ... compare Hans Küng's "global ethic"!)

INGOs

- Non-profit, non-governmental organisations with international focus (TNCs and IGOs are excluded)
- Most known are Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Red Cross...
- INGOs and/or global social movements (women's movement, gay and lesbian rights movement, civil rights movement, movements for democracy and free elections, for the rights of indigenous peoples...) are becoming more and more important for satisfying the needs of people
- Of course, the majority of INGOs are highly specialised and not widely known

INGOs

- Often the INGOs cooperate with IGOs, especially with the United Nations and its agencies – the UN incorporates the INGOs through a so-called ‘consultative status’; sometimes the NGOs actually take up roles that the UN or national governments used to have
- Apart from cooperation, states, INGOs and IGOs are also involved in disagreements about specific lines of development, policies and programmes:
- “Global consensus is often hard to reach, but the globalization of issues – the degree to which issues and policies are debated and settled at the global level – is continually on the rise.” (Lechner & Boli, 2005)

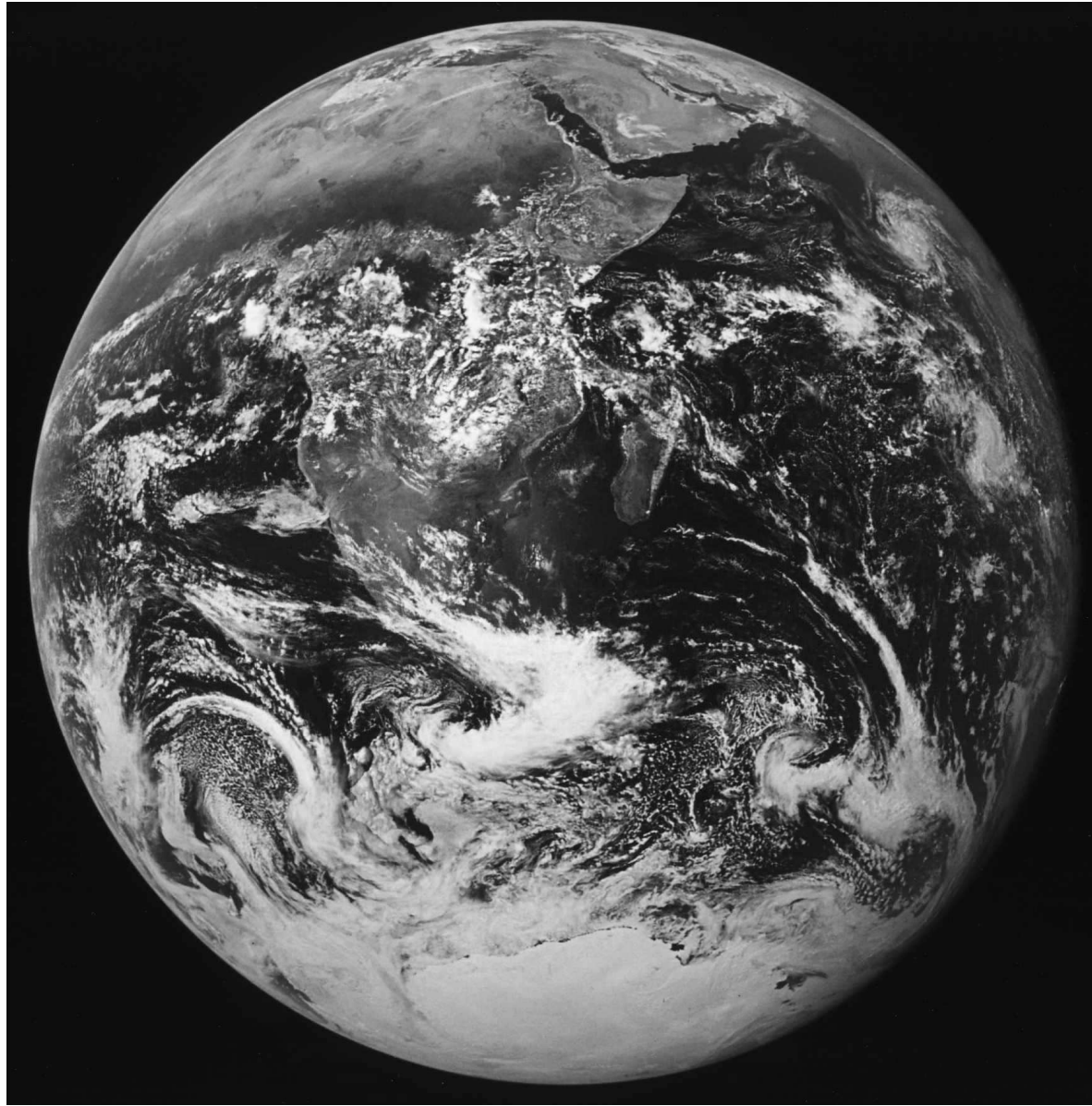
Managing contemporary threats

- The traditional security threat to state from other states is diminishing (see Lecture 4 & arguments of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism)
- New threats: terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, ethnic conflict, combination of rapid population growth + environmental decline + poverty that breeds economic stagnation, political instability, sometimes even state collapse – instead of national security, a new notion of ‘human security’ (Jessica Matthews *Power Shift*, 1997)

Filling the global gap

(Michael Bond *The Backlash Against NGOs*, 2000)

- In 1992, at the UN Earth Summit in Rio the “NGOs had moved from the spectators gallery to the decision-making table”
- Since then they’ve had considerable success and in 2000, representatives from 15 NGOs were invited to take part in debates on G at the World Economic Forum in Davos
- INGOs are filling the democratic deficit, they help express popular opinion and concern



The blue planet

- Computer and telecommunications revolution had deep political and social consequences
- New technologies change people's perceptions of community (what concerns us) by drastically reducing the importance of proximity (closeness)
- Dramatically lower costs of international communication offer citizens new channels of influence

Sustainable development

- The conventions on ozone, world climate and biodiversity prove that the perception of the Earth's bio-physical limits has also entered the field of politics
- Sustainable development means ensuring that the needs of the present do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- 1983: establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (by the UN)

Globalisation & environment

- Environment is relevant to G for 2 reasons:
- A) economic G has significant impact on the environment
- B) environmental issues are becoming ever greater focus of global governance; environmental problems are the paradigmatic example of transborder, supraterritorial effects of G; they spur a lot of IGO and INGOs' activity

G as Environmental Apartheid

(Vandana Shiva *Ecological Balance in an Era of G*, 2000)

- Apartheid = separate development
- A regime of exclusion, where legislation protects a privileged minority and excludes the majority (based on privileges of race or class). The minority takes over the resources and wealth of society, the majority is pushed into a marginalised existence without access to resources necessary for well-being and survival.
- Structural adjustment and trade liberalisation measures (see Lec. 8) are becoming the most serious threat to the survival of people across the Third World
- Northern dumping of toxic waste in the South
- The World Bank chief economist: it makes economic sense to shift polluting industries to Third World countries!

Challenges to G

- Various dissenting social groups
- These diverse social forces have one thing in common: they are convinced that they have to protect themselves and others from negative consequences of G
- But antiglobalists have many different goals & use different methods to advance their cause
- A) particularist protectionists
- B) universalist protectionists (Steger, 2003)

particularist protectionists

- Those who blame G for most of economic, political, social, cultural, etc. problems of their country or region
- They are against free trade, neoliberal agenda of multinational corporations, power of global investors, Americanisation, etc. because they claim these practices cause the fall of living standards and moral decline
- They warn against the loss of national identity and culture, they call for protecting the ‘traditional way of life’
- They are primarily interested in ‘our people’, not the well-being of the world (xenophobia, scapegoating tactics)

universalist protectionists

- Progressive thinkers dedicated to establishment of equitable relations between global North and South
- Many NGOs and transnational movements for protection of environment, women's issues, fair trade, human rights, etc.
- They claim to strive for equality and social justice for all people (not just citizens of their countries)
- Grassroots movements - 'G from below', helping the poor and marginalised, protecting people from a neoliberal 'G from above'
- Working towards a new fair international order of global redistribution of power and wealth

Public demonstrations

- Though at first it seemed that the antiglobalists were too weak to match the dominant neoliberal paradigm, things changed at the end of the 1990s
- Seattle, 30 November 1999 (cca. 50,000 people, anti-WTO protests)
- Davos, January 2001 (World Economic Forum)
- Genoa, July 2001 (100,000 antiglobalist demonstrators at the G8 Summit)
- ...

“The Battle of Seattle”, 1999



Readings for next lecture:

- From Lechner & Boli *The Globalization Reader* read **at least 2** selections:
- **The New International Information Order** Sean MacBride & Colleen Roach
- **Peripheral Vision** John Sinclair & Elizabeth Jacka & Stuart Cunningham
- **Cultural Imperialism** John Tomlinson
- **Bollywood versus Hollywood...** Heather Tyrrell
- **Jihad vs. McWorld** Benjamin Barber
- **The Clash of Civilizations?** Samuel P. Huntington
- **The Challenge of Fundamentalism** Bassam Tibi + **Yes, This Is About Islam** Salman Rushdie (these two texts count as one selection)