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Global Democracy, Private Governance and the Ideology of Global Civil Society

Paper prepared for the 6th Pan-European Conference on International Relations, Torino/Italy, 12 - 15 September 2007, Section 7: Global governance, a critical encounter: depoliticisation/repoliticisation in theory and practice, Panel 4: Global civil society

Abstract

Global governance was originally designed to be a way of managing, or taming, globalization. In the meanwhile, however, it became commonplace that it should not just be effective, but also democratic. In conjuncture with the globalization debate there is widespread agreement about the necessity of finding global forms of democracy. Clearly this posits a heavy challenge to global governance as one of its crucial elements, the involvement of private actors is democratically problematic. One way to overcome this puzzle lies in the reformulation of democracy. The crucial construct in this endeavour, especially in the versions of "cosmopolitan" and "deliberative" democracy, is global civil society. A close analysis of the global civil society concept reveals its strong ideological bias towards private forms of governance.

As an ideology, global civil society favours particular interests while claiming universal applicability. Genuine liberal views of universal individual rights, the superiority of society over the state while dismantling the latter, override crucial differences in state-society relations across the globe. Paradoxically, although global civil society is associated with enhanced participation in the political arenas, its implications and assumptions show a clear tendency of depoliticization. In accordance with global governance's functionalist tendency, global civil society is not a result of political practices but a quasi-naturally occurring phenomenon. Equally, the strong separation of spheres limits the choices for actors. Furthermore, global civil society crucially rests on an apolitical notion of 'community' that systematically suppresses conflicting interests, but which is built around homogenous collective identities instead. In analogy to the first wave of civil society construction in the 18th century, current versions equally dismiss the state and glorify community. Consequently, institutions of global governance seek to remedy their legitimacy deficit by offering access for private actors, such as INGOs. Overall, the concept of global civil society legitimizes the shift of the public-private boundary towards the private side.

In effect, through the ideological function of global civil society, democracy becomes reformulated as to make private, unaccountable governance fit into a scheme labelled democratic. Consequently, global civil society cannot serve as an unconditional reference point for progressive forces.

Introduction: The accountability of global governance

The original focus of global governance laid on managing, or taming, globalization. The Report of the Commission on Global Governance (CGG 1995) was mainly about finding solutions to problems that arose with global interdependence and for which established forms of inter-state cooperation were perceived as insufficient. This problem-solving approach to global governance is still dominant because, by and large, the problems that are about to be solved still constitute objective givens rather than political questions (see Held 2006). In the meantime, however, it became common-

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place that global governance should not just be effective, but also democratic. Early attempts to formulate criteria for enhancing its legitimacy often mirrored the debate on resolving the European democratic deficit (see e.g. Zürn 1998). But when NGO activity and international protest movements became prominent, the accountability debate took a turn: legitimacy is not to be provided through elected bodies anymore but rather through civil society instead (see e.g. Scholte 2002; 2007). Within a relatively short period, the measure for democratic quality of global governance changed significantly. If Scholte argues that "the major democratic deficits [...] have grown during recent decades" (2002, 281), he applies the new 'civil-society-based' standard of democracy onto the recent history of world politics. In fact, it is only with this new model that demands for a democratic world order can be reasonably made.

The reformulation of international legitimacy is a complex process which cannot be adequately summarized here. Instead, I want to highlight only some developments in the discussion that are crucial for the understanding of the rise of global civil society. They form the interdiscourse in which the global civil society concept could develop as it eventually did. First, international accountability is argumentatively shifted from the principle of sovereignty towards the principle of universal human rights. While an internationalist paradigm respected different sovereign legal collectives (Maus 2006), contemporary global politics are constituted by an 'international community of states' (and non-state actors), loyal to a universal and extra-political set of rights, and "constitutive others" (Mouffe 2007), which are basically a couple of deviating states. Second, and related, this shift from an internationalist to a transnationalist perspective effectively forecloses international solidarities based on egalitarian principles. As Craig Murphy (2005, 134-5) convincingly pointed out, global solidarities have been possible before and without global civil society, but the 'international community of states' explicitly decided not to live up to their own ODA commitments nor to fund relevant UN institutions. Similar to 'national' debates, "equality" does not mean to imply factual redistribution anymore but merely recognition of stakeholder's participation in global governance (see Crouch 2004; Fraser 1997). And since, thirdly, this model of 'participatory democracy' prevails, people are sovereign to add "input legitimacy" to global governance, but not to formulate their own laws nor to be in charge of the monopoly of violence. In a similar fashion, the European Commission justifies the massive and largely unregulated influence of lobby groups in the EU through the concept of "associational" or "participatory" democracy (See also Obradovic 1999 and Article 46 of the Draft European Convention). These reformulations of sovereignty, solidarity and democracy mark the discursive terrain of global civil society.

This paper first presents a short sketch of the popular normative model of cosmopolitan or deliberative democracy. Since the institution of global civil society plays a crucial role, the next step will consist of a closer analysis of the civil society discourse within the global democracy debate. Among the many issues that characterize this discourse, I want to focus on two important implications for global governance: its depoliticizing and legitimizing tendencies. I consider these as two main facets of the

global civil society discourse. The discussion in the concluding section will reveal that this discourse stands much more in continuation of the neo-liberal project rather than it is located within the discourses on globalization and democratization.

1. Global democracy

The standard reason for global democracy is said to be the incongruity between territorially defined political organizations and the challenge that globalization poses to them (Held 1995a). This is, after all, an efficiency argument. Following this line, hollowing out of the state becomes a problem of democracy, and hence, globalization eventually leads to undemocratic global regulation. However, instead of naming existing global governance undemocratic, much effort has been put into "rethinking democracy" as to invent versions of democracy that 'fit' the current world order. A different argument, professed at around the same time, argues that the state is only a second-best institution of democracy anyway, and that the rise of global civil society and universal human rights make a really democratic world order possible (Dryzek 1999; Falk 1995). Both strands subsequently engaged in creating blueprints for global democracy that are most commonly labeled as 'cosmopolitan' or 'deliberative'. At the heart of these normative projects lies the idea of a global civil society or a transnational public sphere. While cosmopolitan democracy sets out proposals for a democratic global polity, deliberative democrats rather focus on the procedures and preconditions of global civil society. In his monograph on global democracy, Held designs a detailed model of a global democratic world order (Held 1995a, 231-238; 270-283). This includes, among others, the establishment of a global parliament or people's assembly, development of global democratic public law as opposed to interstate international law, increased regionalization (including regional parliaments), creating and public funding of deliberative assemblies, enhanced accountability of international economical agencies, creation of civil associations and public deliberation on economic decisions (ibid., 279-280). "Cosmopolitan" here means that all people have their voice or representation independent from their national governments (Archibugi 1995, 13). Added that implementation "would be a matter for non-global levels of governance" (Held 1995b, 109) and cosmopolitan law should be "a binding framework for the political business of states, societies and regions, not a detailed regulative framework for the direction of all their affairs" (Held 1995a, 233; Held 2003, 477), this project comes close to EU governance (Held and Patomäki 2006, 123). Cosmopolitan democracy is characterized by four basic principles: egalitarian individualism, reciprocal recognition, consent and inclusiveness (or subsidiarity) (Held 2003). The development of universal human rights stands in accordance with the first principle. As "the ultimate units of moral concern are individual people, not states or other particular forms of human association", this model seeks to establish an international law system that bypasses the state (Held 2003, 470, Falk 1995). The legitimate process of policy formulation consists of deliberation in civil society and its associated fora. If interests are articulated within civil society, they are *de facto* democratic (Falk 2000). In this model, democracy is a procedural property, mostly equated with

'participation'. It follows that the democratic legitimacy of global governance thus can be enhanced through the "extension of popular participation in the political process" (Archibugi 1995, 13). Similarly, within the deliberative model of democracy, "an outcome is legitimate to the extent its production has involved authentic deliberation on the part of the people subject to it. Thus deliberation or communication is the central feature of democracy" (Dryzek 1999, 44). In this respect, it resembles ideas of direct democracy: it demands little institutions, people engage directly instead of through representation and decisions are made by general consent. Despite the problems that arise with the transfer of such republican democratic models to a global scale (Patomäki 2005), Nanz and Steffek view the deliberation concept as an appropriate means for the democratization of global governance (2004). Through deliberation of all stakeholders on a common problem, they create solidarities that possibly transcend state borders and which will fuel an emerging global civil society (ibid., 323).

2. Global civil society

The value of global civil society for global governance is said to propose "alternative norms and mobilizing political support and opposition to existing governance structures" (O'Brien 2005, 218). But while global governance itself is characterized by a variety of different forms of management, its democratization is meant to follow a universal standard. Global democracy is not meant to be the sum of compatible forms of democratic control; instead, *one* model of democracy, namely the liberal-voluntaristic one, is presented as the only possible option. As an effect, global civil society, and not e.g. representative or local forms of democracy, should be the key to democratization. The deliberative model of democracy crucially depends on a sphere such as global civil society. Without such one, deliberation would simply be impossible and consequently, adherents of such a mode of legitimation are the first who claim global civil society to be a near-empirical reality.

Typologies of global civil society concepts are manifold (see Kaldor 2003; Amoore and Langley 2004), but are mostly reducible to two essential versions. Goodhart (2005) calls them the Neo-Tocquevillian and Anti-authoritarian models of global civil society. The former, as a more conservative concept, focuses on the role of voluntary organizations for the effective, stable and balanced social and political order. As he points out, it "is not merely a descriptive account of civil society and its operations [...]. Rather, it tries to explain how a well-functioning civil society supports and facilitates democracy" (2005, 6). The latter, a slightly more dynamic entity, is rather an outcome of political processes of civil society building. It represents a heroic picture of civil society that is opposed to any form of authority, may it be nation states or IGOs (see e.g. Kaldor 2003). These labels are useful to denote the political histories of global civil society - in practice, both are often used interchangeably and by this, their underlying democratic projects become blurred. Both versions carry implications of good ethical standards: Not NGO activity defines global civil society but the set of

values attached to the concept. Adherence to good moral values is the defining criterion to be included in global civil society, much more than being a non-state actor. Apart from their universalist and overtly liberal implications, both versions particularly display fundamental reformulations of politics and the nature of public and private authority, to which we will turn now.

2.1. Depolitization

The standard account of the civil society revival starts with the anti-authoritarian creation of civil society in Eastern Europe, most notably in Poland. The peaceful rise of the solidarity movement became a massive political force that overthrew authoritarian regimes. Similarly, global civil society is presented to be a political antidote to an illegitimate international order. How is it possible that global civil society can represent an instance of depolitization? The argument is threefold: Depolitization generally refers to a rules-based mode of governance instead of one that enables political negotiation. I argue that the centrality of common values and communal identities within global civil society constitute such rules that equally foreclose political intermediation. Furthermore, most concepts of global civil society glorify its capacity to produce balanced and moderate equilibria as well as the absence of fundamental conflict. A third instance of depolitization consists of the 'naturalized' character of global civil society, which is presented as an objectively occurring phenomenon rather than an outcome of political struggles.

2.1.1. *The communitarian global civil society*

The revival of (global) civil society is often fueled by the wish for renewed forms of community. According to Price, "*Transnational civil society* [...] refers to a set of interactions among an imagined community to shape collective life that are not confined to the territorial and institutional spaces of states" (Price 1998, 618). Others see the merits of transnational social movements in their production of global social capital (Smith 1998). Some writers again think about actors in civil society predominantly in terms of identities, which lie at heart of various communities in global civil society. Whereas, according to Kaldor, activists refer to singular cosmopolitanism, postmodernists stress the "importance of national and religious identities as well as multiple identities as a precondition for civil society" (2003, 10). And Lipschutz agrees that those (new) collective identities "are part and parcel of the emergence of global civil society" (1992, 415).

A similar conception of society as being held together by common identities and shared collectivities is apparent throughout the cosmopolitan literature. According to Held, people live in "a world of 'overlapping communities of fate'" (Held 1995a, 136; Held 2003), for others, they do already form *one* "transnational community of fate" (McGrew 1997, 237). Where the global community is not already existing, it is in any case a desirable thing to achieve. For Slaughter, the cosmopolitan project "seeks to

provide the political infrastructure of a universal political community that radically delimits the state" (Slaughter 2005, 151) whereas for Archibugi, it "takes as its aim the creation of a democratic community which both involves and cuts across democratic states" (Archibugi 1995, 13). For it to be realized, it needs the creation of a 'new man', the cosmopolitan citizen, who is able to mediate between traditional, national and other communities and to foster mutual understanding. Such "[p]olitical agents who can 'reason from the point of others' will be better equipped to resolve, and resolve fairly, the new and challenging trans-boundary issues and processes that create overlapping communities of fate" (Held et al. 1999, 449).

The community issue cuts across the main traditions of global civil society. For the anti-authoritarian strand, a shared political destiny lays the seed for civil society. Although the idea of a political community, at first sight, stands in opposition to the Neo-Tocquevillian model, it forms a crucial backbone for its underlying liberal theory. It refers to the ability of collectives to effectively organize themselves; in fact the free development of the deeply inherent creative power of human association is the core of the Tocquevillian approach (Goonewardena and Rankin 2004). From this perspective, a 'collectivized' society is richer and better than a society of atomized individuals. This reasoning also resonates in the 'sister concept' of civil society, that is, *social capital*. It too emphasizes the effectiveness of different modes of organization beyond central steering. Even if we buy this argument, it is nevertheless questionable whether these communal resources can be effectively tapped for global governance: The common fate might be real, "but its perception is lagging" (Wendt 1999, 127).

In his discussion of the relevance of Tönnies' famous distinction between society (*Gesellschaft*) and community (*Gemeinschaft*), Brint (2001) identified six criteria for the existence of a community: Dense and demanding *social ties*, social attachments and *involvement in institutions, rituals* and a small *group size*. To these four structural properties are two cultural ones added: the perception of *similarity* with others and the existence of *common beliefs*. It seems that proponents of deliberative democracy explicitly seek to rediscover some of these properties. They regularly stress the potential of discursive arrangements to produce dense discourses and solidarities (Goodhart 2005, 4). Deliberation also should occur within organized civil societies and is required to be fueled by a common discursive ethos. Furthermore does the limitation of participants to stakeholders provide for a manageable group size. So, in a slight polemic move, we could comment on the deliberative project as heading straight towards political pre-modernity.

The classical liberal concept of civil society instead was especially created to *overcome* community-based organization. In this understanding, 'liberty' is always the freedom of the individual. The period from the Middle Ages to industrialization showed the shift from solidarity towards exchange as dominant modes of social organization (Black 1984). At the end of this period, when industrialization was most extreme and uncontrolled, the "[p]rinciples of the free market have pervaded economic theory,

popular consciousness and the system of political values. The password to respectability in moral discourse is 'liberty'" (ibid., 238). Individual well-being became the measure for the quality of social organization, or, more clearly in the words of Adam Ferguson: "the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society" (cit. in Conway 1995, 7).

From a cosmopolitan standpoint, 'community' should make absolutely no sense, too. However, as we have seen, even Held and others give it a place in their models. Part of the answer to this puzzle might be found in the notion of identity that underpins many contemporary political theories of global democracy. The ethical definition of global civil society and the related 'new politics' of deliberation (Kaldor 2003, 27) are explicitly opposed to 'traditional' modes of politics, in which instrumental action is said to prevail. Consequently, ethical grounds for actions that are rooted in deep-seated beliefs are considered superior to 'narrow' short-term interests. This foundationalism becomes fundamentalist when it leads to a conception of politics in which different political projects become non-negotiable. As Mouffe points out, political society requires openness and conflict and must not fall into pre-political extremes of total consensus or identity fundamentalism (2007). It might be noteworthy that Feminist Theory recognized the perils of identity politics more than a decade ago and searched to re-establish the politics of association (see e.g. Honig 1993). So while Feminists took a U-Turn on the road towards depoliticization, the politics of global civil society seems to be still on track. In contrast to Feminist Theory, community within global civil society is not meant to be a *political* collective that argues and decides on a range of projects. Rather, the merit of such a collectivity is viewed in their ability to provide *social order*. Its function is, similar to nationalism, to legitimize political restructuring by appealing to non-political forms of association (compare Etzioni 2004; critically: Warren 1996; Calhoun 1999; Maus 2006). Invoking the issue of community adds an affective dimension to global civil society (see O'Brien 2005, 220), which covers and suppresses conflicts and tensions by referring to a higher (i.e. more fundamental) order. When supporters of cosmopolitanism argue with the "growing feeling of belonging to a planetary community", they make reference to such an imagined *Gemeinschaft* to legitimate their institutional proposals (Archibugi 2004).

The reference to an anti-political community in global civil society is perfectly compatible with the constant decline of the public sphere and the fall of "public man" (Sennett 1986). People are unable to act as political beings but retreat into the apolitical comfort of community (Warren 1996, 244-8). Such kind of 'politics' is fundamentally opposed to any traditional concept of civil society. Ehrenberg perfectly comments on "the currently fashionable notion that a civil society organized around community and intimacy necessarily provides a fit alternative to powerlessness, alienation, and loneliness.[...] The defense of local interests will always invariably degenerate into a self-satisfied ideology of exclusion that denies the possibilities that come only when the autonomy of strangers is respected and prized. The deep meaning of social life is found when one joins with others in a common endeavor without

having to "know" them. Civil society is not a tribe" (1999, 218). As a consequence, cosmopolitan civil society *cannot*, as many observers argue (Scholte 2000, 180; Ack-erly 2006), produce solidarity. While cosmopolitanism only knows one collective, the world citizenry, a politicized (internationalist) perspective would acknowledge and respect differences among collectives while still being able to find common grounds.

2.1.2. *The equilibrium of global civil society*

Apparently, the decline of state authority coincided with a smooth establishment of global civil society which led John Keane to the observation of "the waxing moon of civil society and the beginnings of a worldwide search for new equilibriums between state and non-state institutions" (Keane 1998, 34). Similarly, the global governance discourse conceives of the 'spheres' of the state, economy and civil society as complementary ones (see e.g. CGG 1995, Goodhart 2005). Such a conception of global civil society as a sphere between intergovernmental institutions and the economy entails a couple of implied assumptions. At first, it suggests 'equal standing' of these three spheres. On a 'level playing field', each of them is of equal value. For international relations, it means that in principle, global civil society has a similar institutional quality as have the state system and the global economy. Only from this perspective one is able to assume a cooperative relation between them that enables balanced solutions for common problems. As a second implication, global civil society is sovereign. Similar to both the state and the market, it is governed by a fundamentally different internal logic. Whereas the state system operates authoritatively, in a top-down manner, the market functions almost exclusively through the logic of exchange. Interaction in civil society, in turn, is said to be characterized by affection, solidarity and trust. "Civil society", according to Dryzek, "is in some ways a realm of freedom in political innovation that stands in marked contrast to the realm of necessity occupied by the state" (1999, 44). Here, he stands clearly in a Lockean tradition (compare McClelland 1996, 530). As sovereign entities, whose governance functions are compatible with each other, these spheres are marked by, thirdly, clear-cut analytical borders. Mittelman, for example, criticizes interweaving of civil society and state agencies because it "poses an ethical dilemma for the 'independent' organs of civil society" (2000, 30). As a consequence, he pleads for the strict separation of these discrete spheres. Perhaps unwillingly, he supports the claim for non-intervention into these realms and the preservation of global civil society's moral purity. In sum, these three spheres constitute compatible and harmonious realms and global governance is mostly about finding the right 'balance' between those different regulative potentials (Kaul 2001).

But global civil society does not only balance with other sectors. Also internally, global civil society is presented as a consensual institution where fundamental conflict or compromise is non-existent. We can detect mainly two groups in the discussion: The first strand assumes consensus and harmony *a priori*. This is especially the case if global civil society is reified as an actor for itself (see for example Price 1998,

Nanz and Steffek 2004, 324, Mittelman 2000, 10f.). Here, civil society is equipped with agency as to engage with the 'outer', especially the interstate system and international organizations. The second group emphasizes global civil society as a 'sphere' or 'arena', where competing interests are principally negotiable. Concepts of deliberative democracy cherish such a view of civil society as the appropriate public space to communicate about the 'good life' (Dryzek 1999, 45). In deliberative democracy, such communicative "processes among stakeholders [...] can create the basis of solidarity beyond national boundaries: through a cooperative search for the best policy practice, engaging in (functional) political participation and sharing expertise" (Nanz and Steffek 2004, 323). For Habermas, the "core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalises problem-solving discourses of general interest inside the framework of organised public spheres. These 'discursive designs' have an egalitarian, open form of organization that mirrors essential features of the kind of communication around which they crystallize and to which they lend continuity and permanence" (1996, cit. in Ehrenberg 1999, 222f.). Civil society, in this view, is explicitly not meant to deal with fundamental conflicts or redistributive issues, the "dark practices of the economic and political system and [...] the intrusive presence of social interests" (Votsos 2001, 24). It is meant to argumentatively get rid of the bad I-word, which makes competing political projects visible and potentially negotiable. As global civil society only knows one common interest in problem-solving, it fits too well within the technocratic version of global governance.

Now this contrasts again with the political foundations of liberal civil society. Referring to the Tocquevillian foundations of American postwar pluralism, Ehrenberg notes: "'Overlapping memberships' and the 'rules of the game' could cut across many fault lines in civil society and discourage the sort of class conflict whose divisive effects could be seen in Europe. Tocqueville could tame Marx. [...] The 'governmental process' was stable and, like the market mechanisms on which it was modeled, it tended towards equilibrium" (Ehrenberg 1999, 203). This equilibrium could only be realized when pluralism is embedded in a 'civic culture' (Almond/Verba), "whose roots could be found in 'community life, social organization, and upbringing of children' in addition to the formal institutions of the state" (ibid., 204). In a similar fashion, Keane acknowledges that "[m]odern civil society is a restless battlefield where interest meets interest. It unfolds and develops in an arbitrary, blind, semi-spontaneous manner [...] civil society cannot remain or become 'civil' unless it is ordered *politically*" (Keane 1998, 50; my emphasis). We see, in liberal tradition, civil society can only flourish if it is embedded in political and cultural institutions. The competitive nature of civil society requires control against 'market failure', for monopolization will be a possible outcome. This, however, is neglected or even outright rejected in global civil society concepts. Since they systematically delegitimize the state (see below), democracy is located within global civil society exclusively. Without any institutional checks against civil society, politics becomes reduced to the market mechanism: "Deliberation, understood as reasoning that is aimed at best addressing practical problems, focuses political debates on the common good: interests,

preferences and aims that comprise the common good are those that 'survive' deliberation" (Nanz and Steffek 2004, 318). The common good thus comes about automatically by the invisible hand of (deliberative) market forces.

This is only possible because deliberative democracy does not know competing interests and hence, no checks are needed. Since only those goods are about to be traded on the political marketplace, which base on the common moral foundation, it is possible to sustain a pluralist rhetoric while actually hamper any diversity of interests: "The associational life of civil society is the actual ground where all versions of the good are worked out and tested...and proved to be partial, incomplete, ultimately satisfying" (Walzer 1995, 16). Here, the compatibility of communitarian rhetoric with liberal pluralism is plain to see: "Ideally, civil society is a setting of settings: all are included, none is preferred" (ibid.). This ambiguity and inconsistency has been rightly commented by Volker Heins: "The philosophers of civil society manage to press both tendencies, the succession of the enlightenment project and the romantic reaction against it, into one single formula: it becomes invoked - at times by one and the same author - to plead for strengthening of the republican sense of community in western market societies, or, the other way round, for the recognition of the radical pluralism of values in a society of minorities" (Heins 2002, 7; see also Brown 2000, 12).

This, as I would argue, is due to the constant intermingling of the two main global civil society concepts. Since both share a couple of basic tenets, it is quite easy to take the legitimacy of the one to defend the other and vice versa. This holds for the issue of community as well as for the sources of harmony and equilibrium. For example, the idea of 'self-regulation' is a crucial aspect of both concepts, which can be used in at least two ways: as an argument for the potential of civil society to create social equilibria on the one (stressing 'regulation'), and as a justification for emancipation from authoritarian structures on the other (emphasizing 'self'). Since both civil societies are in fact not too much different, their relative value can only become visible if the underlying idea of democracy is explicated.

2.1.3. The emerging global civil society

Global civil society is emerging. This picture is drawn by the majority of theorists on global civil society (among many: Lipschutz 1992; Mittelman 2000; Hall 2000; Warkentin and Mingst 2000). While Held called the hope for a transnational civil society as being "premature" in 1995 (1995, 125), only a couple of years later, all of a sudden, he detects its very emergence (2003, 478, Held et al. 1999, 452). Analysts seem to be surprised by the existence of something that they desired so much for the democratization of global politics. However, the normative character of global civil society theorizing leads to affirmative conclusions. To speak of an 'emergent' global civil society implies that such an institution already exists in the minds of actors and social scientists, but has not been realized yet. It further implies that the way towards global civil society is a linear path towards full completion. Theorists, in a teleological and

mechanistic fashion, presuppose an inherent logic of development of civil society as a quasi-natural process. The functional character of global civil society development is even more stressed as it fundamentally neglects the role of agency (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 33). As global civil society comes about naturally, it cannot be a result of political action. Stephen Rosow rightly comments on the role of global civil society for the project of global democratization: It "closes down the possibility that [a global] consensus could be formed *politically* because this would raise the possibility that the liberal democratic state be challenged by alternatives. The formation of the consensus is remaindered, left to a revival of a civic consensus in support of a neoliberal state in civil society" (Rosow 2000, 38).

Where this teleologic stance is not a mere rhetorical figure, it results from intermingling of the analytical and normative theories of global governance (Dingwerth and Pattberg 2006; Higgott 2004) and global civil society (Colás 2005). It is the very neglect of the social and political preconditions of global civil society on the side of normative theorists that make this picture possible. The blueprints for global civil society and cosmopolitan democracy are comparably clear on *what* it should be but less on *how* it will be realized. Consequently, their architects do not have to prove that there actually exists a processual link between an empirical phenomenon (e.g. the 'Battle of Seattle') and the model of global civil society. It is therefore not surprising that those who empirically analyze the work of NGOs and transnational networks, are much more skeptical about the "emergence" of global civil society (see e.g. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Clark, Friedman, and Hochstetler 1998; Heins 2001).

2.2. Strategies of delegitimation and re-legitimation

The rise of global civil society is not so much a result of global political and economic change (as e.g. Kenny and Germain 2005 argue). Rather, it should be understood as an expansion of the neoliberal institutionalization that started in the 1980s within selected national countries and which became reformulated as the "Third Way" during the 1990s. Otherwise two pervasive features of the global civil society discourse would make no sense: The constant demonization of the state and the shift of the private-public-boundary. Both these elements cannot be explained with the end of the cold war nor from any process of globalization. Instead, both are ideological strategies of de- and re-legitimation.

2.2.1. *Delegitimizing the state*

Theories of global governance in the 1990s focused on finding effective ways to solve the decline of state capacity in the light of global challenges. Even the most pessimistic analyst still acknowledged the central role of the state in global regulation and none actually argued for replacing the states system (including IGOs) with an alternative model of the global polity. This is noteworthy, because the projects of cosmopolitan and deliberative democracy explicitly departed from the nation-state's inade-

quacy to govern in the light of globalization, too. Yet their answer to the decline in state capacity is not the need to strengthen the state but rather its demolition. For this line of argument, global civil society is a crucial element. It frequently becomes extrapolated against the state, sometimes even as a 'counterweight' or 'challenge' to the state or the state system (among many, see Lipschutz 1992, 391). Empirically though, no transnational NGO, no transnational social movement ever aimed explicitly at bringing the state to fall. In fact, most NGOs crucially depend on state support and seek opportunities to influence state behavior - hence the thesis of civil society undermining the state is largely unfounded. Nevertheless, the distinction between global civil society and the state system serves the same polarizing function as it did in the age of Paine and Ferguson - just think of Dryzek's "realm of freedom" (see above). Transnational social movements, as an embodiment of global civil society, clearly are on the 'good' side: "Within interstate political contexts, TSMOs [Transnational Social Movement Organizations] raise concerns about economic justice, human rights, and environmental integrity, which are often ignored in negotiations among states that are concerned principally with gaining political, military, or economic advantages" (Smith 1998, 102; see also Falk 1998).

Early liberals had similar concerns about the legitimacy of the state, like Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, who considered the state as a minor and ill-designed form of association:

"What, then, is the state? It is not a creative organ, by any means. It is an organ of criticism, an organ of generalization, coordination, vulgarization. It is [...] a copyist, an enlarger, an exaggerator even. [...] Therefore, voluntary associations, free societies, in any shape or form, by virtue of the flexibility they enjoy, of the rapidity of their successive adaptations, of the greater play they allow to personal interest, and to innovation, of their better-defined responsibility towards their customers, and of the competition they have to face, and which acts as a stimulus to them, ought to be preferred to the State for all services which admit being fulfilled either by the one or by the other" (Leroy-Beaulieu 1978 [1891]).

Here, we can clearly see the liberal vision of the "minimal state". The state is not only considered as incapable of organizing society properly, it is perceived as a morally suspect, but unfortunately necessary entity. The less state involvement, the better for society, or, as Paine stated: "Society in every state is a blessing, but Government, even its best state, is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one" (Paine 1978 [1776], 195). Like Ferguson, he considers human associability to be the driving force of all benign developments whereas the state is posed as an autonomous and destructive parasite: Tracing Paine's paranoid thought, Keane formulates his fears that "everywhere, the greedy hand of state thrusts itself into social life, seizing (the fruits of) its property and inventing further pretences for the collection of yet more taxation revenues" (Keane 1988, 45). While humans are naturally disposed "to establish peaceful and happy relations of competition and solidarity", the state is responsible for

war, political alienation, patriarchal households and poverty through taxation (ibid., 44ff). In short, it is a common move of early liberals to first strictly divide the state from (civil) society to juxtapose them vis-à-vis each other. As a consequence, free society is the bearer of all 'good' whereas the state is a principally illegitimate and malevolent force. This anti-state stance took an extreme form with the early liberals and became only softened with Hegel (see e.g. Goonewardena and Rankin 2004).

The neglect of the state is most prominent in the cosmopolitan democracy concept. Varying in degree, all cosmopolitan projects aim at constructing a 'parallel world' of governance in opposition to the inter-state system. As a first step, its proponents detach political values and institutions from the state and seek to downplay the role of the state in their creation and maintenance. According to Held, the "concept of legitimate political power or authority has to be separated from its exclusive traditional association with states" (Held 1995a,22). States still remain useful, but not "ontologically privileged" (Held 2003, 470; see also O'Brien, Goetz, and Scholte 2000, 4). The value of states is measured along ability to provide public goods. Here, the cosmopolitan vision resembles the functional one within global governance.

This version of a bureaucratic state becomes extrapolated versus "the people" (see also Mittelman 2000, 11). While it is never specified who these people are (in effect, they are mostly represented by NGOs again), they form the social backbone of the cosmopolitan project. In effect, *state* and *society* are regarded as mutually exclusive domains. For cosmopolitans, the state is something external, anti-social, not an institution *within* society but an *enemy* of society, at least, this is the connotation of the dissident's view of the "colonization of society by the state" (Lipschutz 1992, 392). Their model is in large parts constructed on theoretical oppositions to the state system: the state vs. the people, globalization "from above" vs. "from below", international vs. cosmopolitan law (of humanity), government officials vs. stakeholders (Held 1995a, b; Archibugi 1995, 2004; Falk 1995, Nanz and Steffek 2004). While it strongly opposes the states system, however, it remains largely silent on the subject of corporate authority. A "critical stance toward economic globalization does not entail an overall repudiation of these developments, but it does seek to regulate adverse effects and correct social injustices" (Falk 1998, see also Lipschutz 1992). Where states need to be diminished and disempowered, corporate business in contrast, can indeed be tamed. In the end, the economy is presented as being much more a part of civil society than the state (Keane 2003).

Almost universally, private organizations should fulfill public tasks where state action is insufficient. Trends in development aid often favor civil society engagement before state development. Outsourcing of public tasks to private organizations is a major mode of the neo-liberal mode of governance. Global civil society justifies similar practices within global governance. Market regulation, for example in global finance, is often a private enterprise (see e.g. Sinclair 2005). As Chandhoke pointed out, "the legitimisation of the ability of the market to regulate itself, as well as to provide

for both growth and well-being, demanded the delegitimation and the consequent withdrawal of the state from the market" (Chandhoke 2002, 42). The emptied space, figuratively spoken, becomes filled with global civil society. It should serve as the 'public', to which private governance is held accountable when resources of legitimation are withdrawn from the state. Devaluating the state implicitly questions the imperfect, but still rather equal character of the international order. If the international system is to be abolished, the main losers are countries in the global south that would have at least equal suffrage in international bodies.

NGOs not only do 'public' jobs cheaper than state agencies, Western countries can even 'sell' NGO funding as 'empowerment' and thereby shift ODA from public to private bodies (Kaldor 2003, 88; Murphy 2005, 139). NGOs are such an important factor in Bangladesh, so that analysts speak of it as a "franchise state" (Kaldor 2003, 92). For NGOs being employed by western states, they represent a major economic factor in developing states. Brown stresses the development of private security regimes in developing countries. In effect, it leads to selective protection for those who can afford it (2000, 12). What emerges in both cases is not civil society in the optimistic sense but corruption and mafia structures between aid and security industry and local societies. In this respect, global civil society fosters not only private power but also state disintegration. A universalist, cosmopolitan promotion of global civil society thus overrides the crucial societal differences and reinforces the expansion of a particular western model of society.

The main function, however, is to reduce the legitimacy of state-led governance in general. Classical liberals still had despotic government in mind when they formulated their positions. Global civil society, especially its Anti-authoritarian version, one could argue, is nurtured by similar reasoning. As these models are used as blueprints for a democratization of global politics, despotism is associated to *any* form of state institution. All models of global democracy, in which global civil society is opposed to the state, make no distinction between authoritarian and democratic ones. If contemporary global civil society is the antidote to the state, the latter is equated to dictatorship regardless its actual constitution. In this light, even democratic state law is not seen as a source of enforceable rights but rather as a tool for domination. The widespread acceptance of this delegitimizing strategy makes notions of "pillorized states" possible in the first place (Liese 2006). The other way round, actors that carry the 'non-state' prefix, are morally authentic from the outset. Again, both versions of global civil society make use of the same mode of justification. What unites them (and what is ideologically important), is their mutual suspicion against the state as such. From this perspective it does not matter that the power of the capitalist bourgeoisie in the 19th century is not comparable to that of Eastern European dissidents, not to mention contemporary "NGO-multinationals" (Wahl 1998) such as Greenpeace International.

2.2.2. Relegitimizing private authority

Issues about global civil society are always issues about power on a global scale. It would make no sense to speak of global civil society if it would not matter for global governance and the legitimacy of political authority. However, if authority becomes privatized, its legitimation must be adjusted: Either by adding legitimacy to private authority directly or by 'selling' private authority as being in fact public. As stated above, global civil society is designed to fill the space of 'public authority' after the state has been made illegitimate. "Civil society", as Wood points out, "constitutes not only a wholly new relation between 'public' and 'private' but more precisely a wholly new 'private' realm, with a distinctive 'public' presence and oppressions of its own, a unique structure of power and domination, and a ruthless systemic logic" (1995, 254). This "unique structure" of global civil society consists of its ethical foundations - traditional and 'nationally bounded' civil societies are less morally defined. This means that *global* civil society is not so much an *arena* for political struggles, but much more their *subjects* - it is much easier to extend their power for those who can claim the ethical merits of global civil society for their own projects (Germain and Kenny 2005, 198; MacDonald 1994). In conjuncture with contemporary reformulations of democracy, civil society is largely about the "public acceptance of commonly as private understood initiatives" (Votsos 2001, 24; Hopgood 2000). As a consequence, "actors other than states express the public interest" (O'Brien et al 2000, 3). The processes of state delegitimation and increasing private governance go hand in hand.

NGOs succeeded in monopolizing the moral authority inhibited in global civil society. They are largely private actors, who are generally considered to serve the public good. As the embodiment of the 'real' public interest, global civil society adds legitimation to any actor that fulfills governance tasks under its label (The fact that most NGOs depend, in varying degrees, on public funding, makes this relationship more delicate). By transferring governance duties to NGOs, states close down the possibility for public control of authority in certain policy areas. It is under this light that "NGOs represent a basic element in the re-feudalisation of international politics" (Hirsch 2002, 208). The notion of 'neo-feudalism' refers to the increasing role of private power devoid of public control, where 'might is right'. The cosmopolitan model of global civil society should add some democratic element but it fundamentally reinforces the legitimacy of private governance (see also Maus 2006, 478).

This privatization is then not just a matter of whether private institutions can provide certain goods and services better than public bodies (Kaul 2001). In clear historical conjuncture, those actors, which actually govern, also make claims to institutionalized power. As such, privatization is, in Barber's words, "an ideology that saps democracy by attacking public power" (2001, 303). It means that basic goods and values of a society are not necessarily exclusively provided by public institutions, but also by e.g. firms (see Held 1995a, 234). If the international system lacks democracy, as it became common sense, and its formal democratization is out of sight, accountable and legitimate authority is believed to be found in global civil society. Insofar as e.g.

NGOs push corporations for codes of conduct, they implicitly acknowledge and reproduce the legitimacy of private (self-) governance (O'Brien 2005, 223). In this sense, we really witness a "power shift" (Mathews 1997), namely from public to private power.

As we have seen, the deliberative mode cherishes the private character of community. Since only those are subjects of deliberation, that are "affected", it creates a closed community of stakeholders. On the other hand, inclusivity itself is a condition for democracy (Ackerly 2006): the more are included, the more democracy we have. If in the end, all people are affected somehow, it might be empirically true, but deliberation then is a meaningless enterprise. More importantly, participatory democracy refrains from dealing with truly public problems that first might affect whole of society and which, secondly, would differ considerably from the problem of stakeholders, as Ben Thirkell-White showed for banking regulation (Thirkell-White 2006). The governance of interest rates, for example, is a public problem because it affects (potentially) everybody: Not just those who are currently lending money but also those who might do so in the future.²

A healthy dose of global civil society will then enhance the accountability of global governance in any way. Consequently, international organizations seek to tap global civil society in a more or less instrumental way. However, in contrast to proponents of global democracy, for whom global civil society is already emerging in a natural and spontaneous manner, IGOs such as the World Bank perceive the need to actively "build" civil society through "grassroot empowerment" (Stiles 2000). Deliberative "organized civil societies" actually would need to be constructed in the first place, too. Instead of a grassroot movement towards global democratization, we rather witness attempts to achieve catch-up legitimations, not fundamental modification, of actually existing global governance. Seen this way, global civil society is much more installed in a top-down manner (in contrast to the much evoked "bottom-up" metaphor). The role of civil society actors then is narrowed down to 'watchdogs' that should monitor the effectiveness of established ways of global governance and by this add 'public' legitimacy.

3. The ideology of global civil society

Global civil society, one could conclude, is not so much an account of the realities of global governance but rather a moral theory, whose 'global' suffix arouses political connotations. Since most accounts of cosmopolitan civil society reject empirical grounding, their task is first and foremost to produce ideas. These ideas are almost exclusively designed to justify a global polity which is, even in sympathetic opinions, far from being realized. Clearly, these ideas, as we have seen, are internally contradictory and blurry. However, this is only a problem if criticism of global civil society

² The current problem of regulation through rating agencies that emerged with the subprime crisis is another compelling example.

is directed to the appropriateness of its representations. As we often see in the evasive responses to such criticism, global civil society is not meant to be assessed against reality. If we concentrate on the legitimizing function of the concept, we need to engage in ideological critique, this is, to highlight the biases and particularities it searches to universalize (on ideology, see Thompson 1990; Purvis and Hunt 1993; Specifically for global civil society: Bartelson 2006).

The criticism that NGOs are not accountable, or that the concept omits "uncivil" non-state actors, misses the point. What is important, that both statements represent a liberal political order. It is no coincidence that (global) civil society gains popularity now again: it justifies the same liberal order as it did in the 19th century and it disappeared in the 20th century, when liberal politics were frequently dismissed. And just as philosophers aimed to justify wild-west liberalism back then (see Polanyi 1978), we see the same process now going on again. The production of ideologies is, of course, part and parcel of politics, but therefore we must take a closer look at what these ideologies try to legitimate and what they omit. Contemporary theory of global democracy is able to cling onto the legitimacy power of the civil society concept. The ideological move of global civil society, however, is to take politics out of it and replace it with morality. One could say, global civil society carries a liberal form, but a pre-political content.

We saw how global civil society legitimizes private power and anti-political modes of governance through various means. It has also been highlighted how the revived concept of civil society is used to establish reformulations of sovereignty, solidarity and democracy. These reformulations were also at heart within the ideological struggle for neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s (see e.g. Hall 1988; Cox 1997; Burnham 2001). Here, too, privatization was justified with greater efficiency and political problems were perceived as objectively given. The neoliberal project of anti-collectivism demonized political collectives such as unions, but glorified non-political 'citizen initiatives' that provide general social capital. Global civil society stands much more in tradition of this idea, rather than being a continuation of heroic anti-authoritarian movements. Although there are many traditions of liberalism (Gamble and Kenny 2005), the global civil society discourse almost exclusively draws on the classical or neo-liberal one. While transnational social movements and even NGOs might inhibit democratic potential, it is currently underrepresented in the global civil society concept. Instead, their instrumental value for global governance prevails.

In this light, the transnationalization of civil society corresponds with the analysis of the internationalization of the state (Cox 1987; Brand 2007). Global civil society then is an element of the expansive dynamic of the liberal social project - not only spatially, but also across different spheres of life. After the internationalization of state and economy, it is the missing element in the liberal project of transnationalization (Pijl 1995; Pijl 1998). Of course it does not have to be a 1-to-1 copy of national civil society - most probably it isn't. The important feature is that the underlying modes of gov-

ernance associated with global civil society are warranted on a global scale. This implies the permeability of the various state-society-complexes towards a transnational and universal (rather than an international) regulative order. Cosmopolitanism and global civil society are the two most important ideologies for this transformative project.

Paradoxically, quite some critics of neo-liberalism and the existing mode of global governance readily affirm the global civil society concept. However, integrating critical voices is precisely one of the main functions of such an ideology. Therefore it is necessary to be aware of the ideological fallacies and implications of such concepts and to question them, where it is appropriate. For example, the solidarity movement in Poland was not so much a non-state actor as e.g. Greenpeace because it explicitly aimed to take the state with its legal and enforcement capacities over. The same might be argued for some Latin American social movements, but not for the NGOs that act as watchdogs and thus are explicitly *not* interested into interfering into the business of the state. Making global civil society work for progressive political projects starts by becoming sensible to its hidden ideological implications.

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