

## Chapter 1

# Globalization and global politics

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### Reader's Guide

This chapter considers how globalization is altering traditional understandings of world politics. Globalization is a term which captures the growing intensity of worldwide interconnectedness: in short, a 'shrinking world'. It is, however, a highly uneven process, so far from necessarily creating a more cooperative world it is also a source of global friction, instability, inequality, and conflict. While it has important consequences for the power and autonomy of national governments, it by no means prefigures, as many have argued or desired, the demise of the nation-state nor of conventional geopolitics. Rather, globalization is associated with significant changes or transformations in world politics which

are the focus of this chapter. In particular, the chapter concludes that a shift in our thinking is required to grasp fully the nature of these transformations. This conceptual shift involves embracing the idea of global politics: the politics of an embryonic global society in which domestic and world politics, even if conceptually distinct, are practically inseparable. It also requires rethinking some of the traditional assumptions and institutions of modern political life—from sovereignty to democracy—since in a globalized world, power and politics are no longer simply organized according to a national or territorial logic. This chapter has two key objectives: to clarify the concept of globalization; and to explore the consequences of globalization for our understanding of world politics.

## Introduction

**Globalization**—simply the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide **interconnectedness**—remains a contentious issue in the study of world politics. Some—the hyperglobalists—argue that it is bringing about the demise of the sovereign **nation-state** as global forces undermine the ability of governments to control or manage their own economies and societies (Ohmae 1995; Scholte 2000). By contrast, sceptics reject the idea of globalization as so much ‘globaloney’. They argue that states and geopolitics remain the principal agents and forces shaping world politics today (Krasner 1999; Gilpin 2001). This chapter takes a rather different approach—a transformationalist perspective—concluding that both the hyperglobalists and sceptics alike exaggerate their arguments. This transformationalist argument accepts that, although predictions of the demise of the sovereign state are exaggerated, nevertheless globalization is associated strongly with the emergence of a new **global politics** in which the traditional distinction between domestic and international affairs is no longer very meaningful. Under

these conditions, ‘politics everywhere, it would seem, are related to politics everywhere else’, such that the orthodox approaches to international relations—which are constructed upon this very distinction—provide at best only a partial insight into the forces shaping the contemporary world (Rosenau in Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert 1976: 22).

Since it is such a ‘slippery’ and overused concept, it is hardly surprising that globalization should engender controversy. Accordingly, this chapter begins by reviewing the concept of globalization before exploring its implications for the study of world politics. The chapter is organized into two main sections: the first will address several interrelated questions, namely: What is globalization? How is it best conceptualized and defined? How is it manifest today, most especially given the events of 9/11 and the 2008–9 global financial crisis? Is it really all that new? The second section will explore the ways in which globalization is producing a form of global politics that is highly skewed in favour of the powerful, largely to the exclusion of the majority of humankind.

## Evidencing globalization

Over the last three decades the sheer scale and scope of global interconnectedness has become increasingly evident in every sphere, from the economic to the cultural. Worldwide economic integration has intensified as the expansion of global commerce, finance, and production binds together the economic fortunes of **nations**, communities, and households across the world’s major trading regions and beyond within an emerging global market economy. The integration of the world economy is such that no national economy—as events during the recent financial crisis demonstrate—can insulate itself entirely from the contagion effect of turmoil in global markets. Economic instability in one region, whether recession in the UK or the continued Euro crisis, takes its toll on jobs, production, savings, and investment many thousands of miles away, from Birmingham to Bangkok, Wenzhou to Wyoming.

Every day over \$4 trillion flows across the world’s foreign exchange markets. No government, even the most

powerful, has the resources to resist sustained speculation against its currency and thereby the credibility of its economic policy (see Ch. 27). Furthermore, governments have to borrow significant sums in world bond markets. Their creditworthiness determines the availability and cost of such borrowing. In the aftermath of the 2008–9 financial crises, many governments, including the UK and USA, confront real reductions in public spending in order to protect their creditworthiness in world bond markets.

Transnational corporations now account for between 25 and 33 per cent of world output, 70 per cent of world trade, and 80 per cent of international investment, while overseas production by these firms considerably exceeds the level of world exports, making them key players in the global economy, controlling the location and distribution of economic and technological power (see Case Study 1).

New modes and infrastructures for global communication have made it possible to organize and mobilize

Case Study 1 Global production and the iPod



Take just one component of the iPod nano, the central microchip provided by the US company PortalPlayer. The core technology of the chip is licensed from British firm ARM and is modified by PortalPlayer's programmers in California, Washington State, and Hyderabad. PortalPlayer then works with microchip design companies in California that send the finished design to a 'foundry' in Taiwan (China) that produces 'wafers' (thin metal disks) imprinted with thousands of chips. The capital costs of these foundries can be more than \$2.5 million. These wafers are then cut up into individual disks and sent elsewhere in Taiwan (China), where each one is tested. The chips are then encased in plastic and readied for

assembly by Silicon-Ware in Taiwan (China) and Amkor in the Republic of Korea. The finished microchip is then warehoused in Hong Kong (China) before being transported to mainland China, where the iPod is assembled.

Working conditions and wages in China are low relative to Western standards and levels. Many workers live in dormitories and work long hours. It is suggested that overtime is compulsory. Nevertheless, wages are higher than the average of the region in which the assembly plants are located and allow for substantial transfers to rural areas and hence contribute to declining rural poverty. PortalPlayer was only established in 1999 but had revenues in excess of \$225 million in 2005. PortalPlayer's chief executive officer has argued that the outsourcing to countries such as India and Taiwan (China) of 'non-critical aspects of your business' has been crucial to the development of the firm and its innovation: 'it allows you to become nimbler and spend R&D dollars on core strengths'. Since 2003, soon after the iPod was launched, the share price of Apple, the company that produces and sells the iPod, has risen from just over \$6 to over \$60. Those who own shares in Apple have benefited from the globalization of the iPod.

*Reproduced from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The World Bank (2006), Global Economic Prospects 2007: Managing the Next Wave of Globalization (Washington, DC: World Bank): 11. (Report sources: C. Joseph, 'The iPod's Incredible Journey', Mail on Sunday, 15 July 2006; 'Meet the iPod's "Intel"', Business Trends, 32(4) (April), 2006)*

like-minded people across the globe in virtual real time—as demonstrated by the Arab spring in 2011 as democratic movements spread across the Middle East—and the more than 45,000 international **non-governmental organizations** (NGOs), from Greenpeace to the Climate Action Network, not to mention the activities of transnational criminal and terrorist networks, from drugs cartels to Al Qaeda.

With a global communications infrastructure has also come the transnational spread of ideas, ethnic cultures, and information, from Madonna to Muhammad, both among like-minded peoples and between different cultural groups, reinforcing simultaneous tendencies towards both an expanded sense of global solidarity among the like-minded and difference, if not outright hostility, between different societies, nations, and ethnic groupings.

People—with their cultures—are also on the move in their tens of millions—whether legally or illegally—with global migration on a scale of the great nineteenth-century movements but now transcending all continents, from South to North and East to

West, while each year over 600 million tourists traverse the globe.

As globalization has intensified, so has the recognition of transnational problems requiring global regulation, from climate change to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Dealing with these transnational issues has led to an explosive growth in transnational and global forms of rule-making and regulations, from annual **G20** summits to climate change conferences. This is evident in both the expanding jurisdiction of formal **international organizations**, such as the **International Monetary Fund** or the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the literally thousands of informal networks of **cooperation** between parallel government agencies in different countries, from the Financial Action Task Force (which brings together government experts on money-laundering from major countries) to the Dublin Group (which brings together drug enforcement agencies from the European Union, the USA, and other countries).

With the recognition of global problems and global interconnectedness has also come a developing

awareness of the multiple ways in which the security and prosperity of communities in different regions of the world are bound together. A single terrorist bombing in Bali has repercussions for public perceptions of security in Europe and the USA, while agricultural subsidies in the USA and the EU have significant consequences for the livelihoods of farmers in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

We inhabit a world in which the most distant events can rapidly, if not almost instantaneously, come to have very profound consequences for our individual and collective prosperity and security. For the sceptics, however, this is far from a novel condition but is a symptom of growing international **interdependence**, that is linkages between nation-states.

How then does the concept of globalization differ from notions of internationalization or interdependence? What, in other words, is globalization?

#### Key Points

- Over the last three decades the sheer scale, scope, and acceleration of global interconnectedness has become increasingly evident in every sphere, from the economic to the cultural.
- Sceptics consider that this is simply evidence of growing international interdependence, i.e. linkages between countries. A key issue is how the term 'globalization' differs from internationalization, i.e. international interdependence.

### Conceptualizing globalization

Initially, it might be helpful to think of globalization as a process characterized by:

- stretching of social, political, and economic activities across political frontiers so that events, decisions, and activities in one region of the world come to have significance for individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe; civil wars and conflict in the world's poorest regions, for instance, increase the flow of asylum seekers and illegal migrants into the world's affluent countries;
- the intensification, or the growing magnitude, of interconnectedness in almost every sphere of social existence, from the economic to the ecological, from the activities of Microsoft to the spread of harmful microbes such as the SARS virus, from the intensification of world trade to the spread of weapons of mass destruction;
- the accelerating pace of global interactions and processes as the evolution of worldwide systems of trans-

- the growing extensity, intensity, and velocity of global interactions, which is associated with a deepening enmeshment of the local and global in so far as local events may come to have global consequences and global events can have serious local consequences, creating a growing collective awareness or consciousness of the world as a shared social space, that is globality or **globalism**; this is expressed, among other ways, in the worldwide diffusion of the very idea of globalization itself as it becomes incorporated into the world's many languages, from Mandarin to Gaelic.

As this brief analysis suggests, there is much more to the idea of globalization than simply internationalization or international interdependence. It implies that the cumulative scale, scope, velocity, and depth of contemporary interconnectedness is dissolving the significance of the borders and boundaries that separate the world into its many constituent states or national eco-

carries with it the implication of an unfolding process of structural change in the scale of human social and economic organization. Rather than social, economic, and political activities being organized solely on a local or national territorial scale today, they are also increasingly organized on a transnational or global scale. Globalization therefore denotes a significant shift in the scale of social organization, in every sphere from economics to security, transcending the world's major regions and continents (see **Box 1.1**).

Central to this structural change are contemporary informatics technologies and infrastructures of communication and transportation. These have greatly facilitated new forms and possibilities of virtual real-time worldwide organization and coordination, from the operations of multinational corporations to the worldwide mobilization and demonstrations of the anti-globalization movement. Although geography and distance do still matter, it is nevertheless the case that globalization is synonymous with a process of **time-space compression**—literally a shrinking world—in which the sources of even very local developments, from unemployment to ethnic conflict, may be traced to distant conditions or decisions. In this respect globalization embodies a process of **deterritorialization**: as social, political, and economic activities are increasingly 'stretched' across the globe, they become in a significant sense no longer organized solely according to a strictly territorial logic. Terrorist and criminal networks, for instance, operate both locally and globally. National economic space, under conditions of globalization, is no longer coterminous with national territorial space—for example, many of the UK's largest companies have their

headquarters abroad and many domestic companies now outsource their production to China and East Asia, among other locations. This is not to argue that territory and borders are now irrelevant, but rather to acknowledge that under conditions of globalization their relative significance, as constraints on social action and the exercise of power, is declining. In an era of instantaneous real-time global communication and organization, the distinction between the domestic and the international, inside and outside the state, breaks down. Territorial borders no longer demarcate the boundaries of national economic or political space.

A 'shrinking world' implies that sites of power and the subjects of power quite literally may be continents apart. As the world financial crisis of 2008 illustrates, the key sites and agencies of decision-making, whether in Washington, Beijing, New York, or London, quite literally are oceans apart from the local communities whose livelihoods are affected by their actions (see **Box 1.2**).

In this respect globalization captures the idea that power (whether economic, political, cultural, or military) is organized and exercised (or increasingly has the potential to be) above, across, and around the (national

### Box 1.1 Definitions of globalization

Globalization is variously defined in the literature as:

- 1 'The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.'  
(Giddens 1990: 21)
- 2 'The integration of the world-economy.'  
(Gilpin 2001: 364)
- 3 'De-territorialization—or . . . the growth of supraterritorial relations between people.'  
(Scholte 2000: 46)
- 4 'time-space compression'  
(Harvey 1989)

### Box 1.2 Globalization at risk?

While the causes of the financial crisis of 2008 remain hotly debated, there is a general consensus that, both in terms of its scale and severity, the crisis posed the greatest risk to the effective functioning of the entire world economy since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Without unprecedented internationally coordinated intervention by the governments of the world's major economies, confirmed at the 2009 G20 summits in London and Pittsburgh, the crisis could have degenerated into an economic catastrophe much worse than that of 1929. As the crisis unfolded throughout 2008 and 2009, it precipitated an unprecedented contraction in global economic transactions, from international bank lending to foreign investment, trade in commodities and manufactures, and transnational production. The 'great correction' of 2008 put economic globalization at risk. Paradoxically, in doing so it has reinforced tendencies towards political globalization as governments sought to coordinate their economic strategies to prevent a slide into a global depression or towards protectionism. Moreover, for emerging powers such as China, India, and Brazil, economic globalization remains essential to sustaining economic growth and national prosperity. While economic globalization remains at risk, it has proved far more resilient than many assumed as the world's newly emerging powers have become the principal engines of global growth and the potential agents of a new wave of globalization.

territorial) state. As such, the concept of globalization describes the relative denationalization of power in so far as, in an increasingly interconnected global system, power is organized and exercised on a transregional, transnational, or transcontinental basis, while—see the discussion of political globalization—many other actors, from international organizations to criminal networks, exercise power within, across, and against states. States no longer have a monopoly of power resources, whether economic, coercive, or political.

To summarize: globalization is a process that involves a great deal more than simply growing internationalization or interdependence between states. It can be defined as:

a historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents.

Such a definition enables us to distinguish globalization from more spatially delimited processes such as **internationalization** and **regionalization**. Whereas internationalization refers to growing interdependence between states, the very idea of internationalization

thousands of miles away can come to have almost immediate local consequences, while the impacts of even more localized developments may be diffused rapidly around the globe.

If globalization refers to transcontinental or transregional networks, flows, or interconnectedness, then regionalization can be conceived of as the intensification of patterns of interconnectedness and integration among states that have common borders or are geographically proximate, as in the **European Union** (see Ch. 26). Accordingly, whereas flows of trade and finance between the world's three major economic blocs—North America, Asia Pacific, and Europe—constitute globalization, by contrast, such flows within these blocs are best described as regionalization.

#### Key Points

- Globalization denotes a tendency towards the growing extensity, intensity, velocity, and deepening impact of worldwide interconnectedness.
- Globalization is associated with a shift in the scale of social organization, the emergence of the world as a shared social space, the relative deterritorialization of social, economic, and political activity, and the relative denationalization of power.
- Globalization can be conceptualized as a fundamental shift

MegaLecture

### Box 1.3 The sceptical view of globalization

Sceptical accounts of globalization tend to dismiss its significance for the study of world politics. They do so on the grounds that:

- 1 By comparison with the period 1870 to 1914, the world is much less globalized economically, politically, and culturally.
- 2 The contemporary world is marked by intensifying geopolitics, regionalization, and internationalization, rather than by globalization.
- 3 The vast bulk of international economic and political activity is concentrated within the group of OECD states.
- 4 By comparison with the heyday of European global empires, the majority of the world's population and countries in the South are now much less integrated into the global system.
- 5 Geopolitics, state power, nationalism, and territorial boundaries are of growing, not reducing, significance in world politics.
- 6 Globalization is at best a self-serving myth or conceptual folly (according to Rosenberg) that conceals the significance of Western capitalism and US hegemony in shaping contemporary world politics.
- 7 Responses to the financial crisis demonstrate the centrality of hegemonic and national power to the effective functioning of the world economy.

(Hirst and Thompson 1999, 2003; Hay 2000; Hoogvelt 2001; Gilpin 2002)

One of the weaknesses of the sceptical argument is that it tends to conflate globalization solely with economic trends: it sometimes invokes a form of economic reductionism. As such it overlooks non-economic trends and tendencies or treats them as insignificant. As noted, globalization is not a singular process: it is manifest in all aspects of social life, from politics to production, culture to crime, and economics to education. It is implicated directly and indirectly in many aspects of our daily lives, from the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the knowledge we access, through to our individual and collective sense of identity and security in an uncertain world. Evidence of globalization is all around us: universities are literally global institutions, from the recruitment of students to the dissemination of academic research. To understand contemporary globalization therefore requires a mapping of the distinctive patterns of worldwide interconnectedness in all the key sectors of social activity, from the economic and the political through to the military, the cultural, and the ecological.

As **Box 1.4** illustrates, globalization is occurring, albeit with varying intensity and at a varying pace, in every domain of social activity. Of course it is more advanced in some domains than others. For instance, economic globalization is much more extensive and intensive than either cultural or military globalization. To this extent contemporary globalization is highly complex. Contrary to the sceptics' view, it is crucial to appreciate that globalization is a multidimensional process: patterns of economic globalization and cultural globalization are neither identical nor simply reducible to one another. In this respect, drawing general conclusions about globalizing tendencies simply from one domain produces a somewhat partial and inaccurate interpretation. As noted, in the aftermath of 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008 the slowdown in economic globalization was heralded by sceptics as evidence of the end of globalization. This interpretation ignores the

### Box 1.4 Patterns of contemporary globalization

Globalization, to varying degrees, is evident in all the principal sectors of social interaction:

**Economic:** in the economic sphere, patterns of worldwide trade, finance, and production are creating global markets and, in the process, a single global capitalist economy—what Castells (2000) calls 'global informational capitalism'. Multinational corporations organize production and marketing on a global basis while the operation of global financial markets determines which countries get credit and on what terms.

**Military:** in the military domain the global arms trade, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the growth of transnational terrorism, the growing significance of transnational military corporations, and the discourse of global insecurity point to the existence of a global military order.

**Legal:** the expansion of transnational and international law from trade to human rights, alongside the creation of new world legal institutions such as the International Criminal Court, is indicative of an emerging global legal order.

**Ecological:** a shared ecology involves shared environmental problems, from global warming to species protection, alongside the creation of multilateral responses and regimes of global environmental governance.

**Cultural:** we see a complex mix of homogenization and increased heterogeneity given the global diffusion of popular culture, global media corporations, communications networks, etc., simultaneously with the reassertion of nationalism, ethnicity, and difference. But few cultures are hermetically sealed off from cultural interaction.

**Social:** shifting patterns of migration from South to North and East to West have turned migration into a major global issue as movements come close to the record levels of the great nineteenth-century movements of people.

accelerating pace of globalization in the military, technological, and cultural domains—from drone strikes in Pakistan directed from bunkers in the US Midwest to the viral spread of Gangnam Style. Moreover, the pace of economic globalization has even remained remarkably resilient in the face of military interventions, the war on terror, and the world financial crisis.

If patterns of contemporary globalization are highly

#### Box 1.5 The engines of globalization

Explanations of globalization tend to focus on three interrelated factors: technics (technological change and social organization); economics (markets and capitalism); and politics (power, interests, and institutions).

**Technics**—central to any account of globalization since it is a truism that without modern communications infrastructures, in particular, a global system or worldwide economy would

Mega Lecture



### Box 1.6 Waves of globalization

Globalization is not a novel phenomenon. Viewed as a secular historical process by which human civilizations have come to form a single world system, it has occurred in three distinct waves.

In the first wave, the age of discovery (1450–1850), globalization was decisively shaped by European expansion and conquest.

The second wave (1850–1945) evidenced a major expansion in the spread and entrenchment of European empires.

By comparison, contemporary globalization (1960 on) marks a new epoch in human affairs. Just as the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of the West in the nineteenth century defined a new age in world history, so today the micro-chip and the satellite are icons of a globalized world order. It is also associated with a shift in economic power from the West to the East with the rise of China and India.

A fourth wave of globalization may be in the making, driven by the emerging economic powers of China, Brazil, India, and others.

unparalleled qualitative differences—in terms of how globalization is organized and managed. The existence of new real-time global communications infrastructures, in which the world literally is transformed into a single social space, distinguishes very clearly contemporary globalization from that of the past. In these respects it is best described as a ‘thick’ form of globalization or globalism (Held, McGrew et al. 1999; Keohane and Nye 2003).

As such, thick globalization delineates the set of constraints and opportunities that confront governments, conditioning their freedom of action or autonomy, most especially in the economic realm. For instance, the unprecedented scale of global financial flows at over \$4 trillion per day imposes a significant discipline on any government, even the most economically powerful, in the conduct of national economic policy. The Euro crisis demonstrates how global financial markets condition not only the economic policies of heavily indebted countries, such as Greece and Spain, but also the policy responses of the European Union in defending the currency union. Thick globalization embodies a powerful systemic logic which can impose limits to state power and autonomy. It therefore has significant consequences for how we understand world politics.

### Key Points

- Economic globalization may be at risk as a result of the 2008 financial crisis, but the contemporary phase of globalization has proved more robust than the sceptics recognize.
- Contemporary globalization is a complex and uneven process.
- Contemporary globalization is best described as a thick form of globalization or globalism.

## Globalization and global politics

Consider a political map of the world: its most striking feature is the division of the entire earth’s surface into over 200 neatly defined territorial units—namely sovereign states. To a student of politics in the Middle Ages, a map of the world dominated by borders and boundaries would make little sense. Borders are a relatively recent development, as is the idea that states are sovereign, self-governing, territorially delimited political communities or polities. Although today a convenient fiction, this presumption remains as central to orthodox state-centric conceptions of world politics as the pursuit of power and interests between sovereign states. Globalization, however, calls this state-centric conception of world politics into question. Taking globalization seriously therefore requires a shift in the way we think about world politics.

### The Westphalian Constitution of world order

The Peace Treaties of Westphalia and Osnabruck (1648) established the legal basis of modern statehood, and by implication the fundamental rules or constitution of modern world politics. Although Pope Innocent referred to the Westphalian settlement at the time as ‘null, reprobate and devoid of meaning for all time’, in the course of the subsequent four centuries it has formed the **normative structure** or constitution of the modern world order. At the heart of the Westphalian settlement was agreement among Europe’s rulers to recognize each other’s right to rule their own territories, free from outside interference. This was codified over time in the doctrine of sovereign statehood. But

it was only in the twentieth century, as global empires collapsed, that sovereign statehood and with it national self-determination finally acquired the status of universal organizing principles of world order. Contrary to Pope Innocent's prediction, the Westphalian Constitution by then had come to colonize the entire planet.

Constitutions are important because they establish the location of legitimate political authority within a polity and the rules that inform the exercise and limits of political power. In codifying and legitimating the principle of sovereign statehood, the Westphalian Constitution gave birth to the modern states system. It welded the idea of **territoriality** with the notion of legitimate sovereign rule. Westphalian sovereignty located supreme legal and political authority within territorially delimited states. **Sovereignty** involved the rightful entitlement to exclusive, unqualified, and supreme rule within a delimited territory. It was exclusive in so far as no ruler had the right to intervene in the sovereign affairs of other nations; unqualified in that within their territories rulers assumed complete authority over their subjects; and supreme in that there was no legal or political authority above the state. Of course for many, especially weak states, sovereignty—as the legitimate claim to rule—has not always translated into effective control within their territories. As Krasner recognizes, the Westphalian system has for many states been little more than a form of 'organized hypocrisy' (Krasner 1999). Nonetheless, this never fundamentally compromised its influence on the developmental trajectory of world politics. Although the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights modified aspects of the Westphalian Constitution, in qualifying aspects of state sovereignty, it remains the founding covenant of world politics. However, many argue that contemporary globalization presents a fundamental challenge to the Westphalian ideal of sovereign statehood and in so doing is transforming the world order (see Box 1.7).

### From (state-centric) geopolitics to (geocentric) global politics

As globalization has intensified over the last five decades, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the popular fiction of the 'great divide': treating political life as having two quite separate spheres of action, the domestic and the international, which operate according to different logics, with different rules,

#### Box 1.7 The Westphalian Constitution of world politics

- 1 **Territoriality:** humankind is organized principally into exclusive territorial (political) communities with fixed borders.
- 2 **Sovereignty:** within its borders the state or government has an entitlement to supreme, unqualified, and exclusive political and legal authority.
- 3 **Autonomy:** the principle of self-determination or self-governance considers countries as autonomous containers of political, social, and economic activity—fixed borders separate the domestic sphere from the world outside.

actors, and agendas. There is a growing recognition that, as former President Clinton described it:

the once bright line between domestic and foreign policy is blurring. If I could do anything to change the speech patterns of those of us in public life, I would like almost to stop hearing people talk about foreign policy and domestic policy, and instead start discussing economic policy, security policy, environmental policy.

(Quoted in Cusimano 2000: 6)

As the substantive issues of political life consistently ignore the artificial foreign/domestic divide, from global warming to national courts enforcing the rulings of the World Trade Organization, the Westphalian Constitution appears increasingly anachronistic. A distinctive form of global politics is emerging.

To talk of global politics is to recognize that politics itself is being globalized, with the consequence that there is much more to the study of world politics than solely conflict and cooperation between states (inter-state or international politics), even if this remains crucial. In other words, globalization challenges the one-dimensionality of orthodox accounts of world politics that give primacy to geopolitics and the struggle for power between states. By contrast, the concept of global politics focuses our attention on global structures and processes of rule-making, problem-solving, and the maintenance of security and order in the world system (Brown 1992). It acknowledges the continuing centrality of states and geopolitics, but does not a priori privilege either of them in understanding and explaining contemporary world affairs. For, under conditions of political globalization, states are

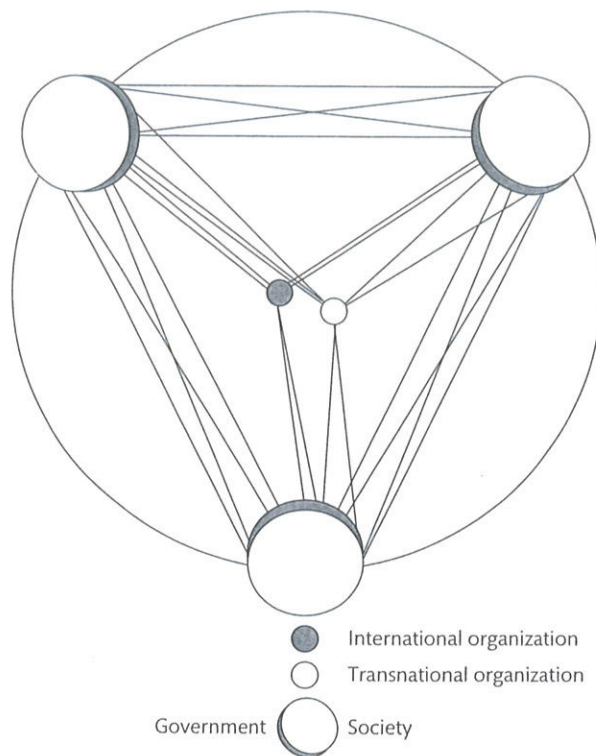


Figure 1.1 The World Wide Web

increasingly embedded in thickening and overlapping worldwide webs of: multilateral institutions and multilateral politics, from NATO and the World Bank to the G20; transnational associations and networks, from the International Chamber of Commerce to the World Muslim Congress; **global policy networks** of officials, corporate, and non-governmental actors, dealing with global issues, such as the Global AIDS Fund and the Roll Back Malaria Initiative; and those formal and informal (transgovernmental) networks of government officials dealing with shared global problems, including the Basle Committee of central bankers and the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering (see Fig. 1.1).

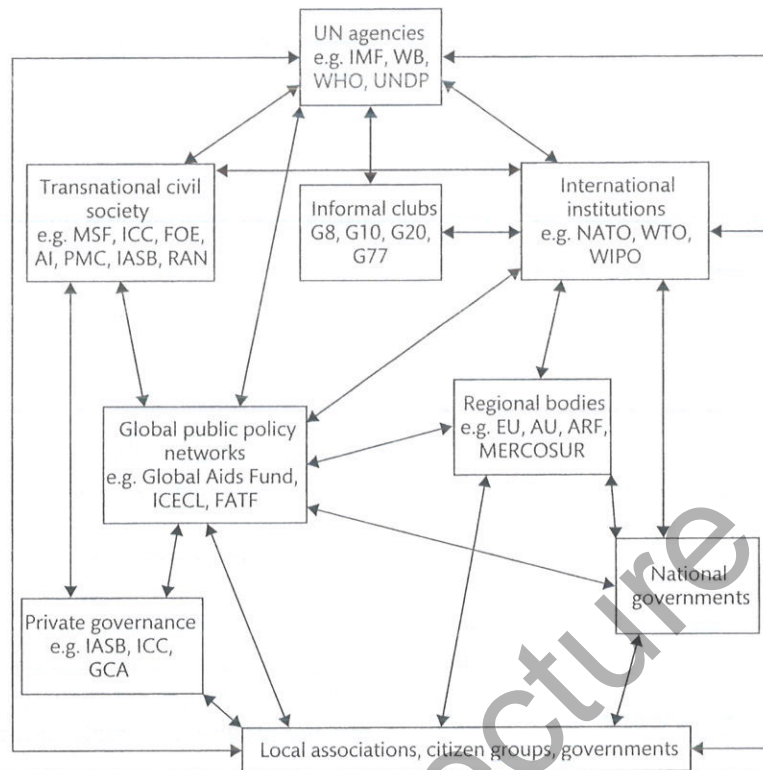
Global politics directs our attention to the emergence of a fragile **global polity** within which 'interests are articulated and aggregated, decisions are made, values allocated and policies conducted through international or transnational political processes' (Ougaard 2004: 5)—in other words, to how the global order is, or fails to be, governed.

Since the UN's creation in 1945, a vast nexus of global and regional institutions has evolved, increasingly associated with a proliferation of non-governmental agencies and networks seeking to influence the governance of global affairs. While **world government**

remains a fanciful idea, an evolving **global governance** complex exists—embracing states, international institutions, and transnational networks and agencies (both public and private)—that functions, with variable effect, to promote, regulate, or intervene in the common affairs of humanity (see Fig. 1.2). Over the last five decades, its scope and impact have expanded dramatically, with the result that its activities have become significantly politicized, as the G7 summits and recent Copenhagen summit on climate change attest.

This evolving global governance complex comprises a multitude of formal and informal structures of political coordination among governments, inter-governmental and transnational agencies—public and private—designed to realize common purposes or collectively agreed goals by making or implementing global or transnational rules, and regulating trans-border problems. A good illustration of this is the creation of international labour codes to protect vulnerable workers. The International Convention on the Elimination of Child Labour (ICECL), for instance, was the product of complex politics involving public and private actors from trade unions, industrial associations, humanitarian groups, governments, legal experts, not forgetting officials and experts within the International Labour Organization (ILO). Similarly, transnational campaigns to improve the pay and working conditions of labour in the factories making the accoutrements of modern life, from iPhones to Nike trainers, have mobilized consumer and media power to pursue their goals.

Within this global governance complex, private or non-governmental agencies have become increasingly influential in the formulation and implementation of global public policy. The International Accounting Standards Board establishes global accounting rules, while the major credit-rating agencies, such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's, determine the credit status of governments and corporations around the globe. This is a form of private global governance in which private organizations regulate (often in the shadow of global public authorities) aspects of global economic and social affairs. In those realms in which it has become highly significant, mainly the economic and the technological, this private global governance involves a relocation of authority from states and multilateral bodies to non-governmental organizations and private agencies. Global financial markets, too, exercise significant power, as the citizens of indebted European countries have come to experience, through policies of economic



KEY:

AI	Amnesty International	GCA	Global credit agencies, e.g. Moody's, Standard and Poor's
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum	IASB	International Accounting Standards Board
AU	African Union	ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
EU	European Union	ICECL	International Convention on the Elimination of Child Labour
FATF	Financial Action Task Force (on money-laundering)	IMF	International Monetary Fund
FOE	Friends of the Earth	MERCOSUR	Southern American Common Market
G8	Group of 8 (USA, Italy, UK, France, Germany, Russia, Canada, Japan & EU)	MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
G10	Group of 10 (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA)	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
G20	Brings together the major Western governments and the governments of the leading emerging economies, including Brazil, China, India and Russia	PMC	Private military companies, e.g. Sandline
G77	Group of 77 developing countries	RAN	Rainforest Action Network
		UNDP	UN Development Programme
		WB	World Bank
		WHO	World Health Organization
		WIPO	World Intellectual Property Rights Organization
		WTO	World Trade Organization

Figure 1.2 The global governance complex

austerity designed primarily to persuade global bond markets to continue lending to their governments.

Coextensive with the global governance complex is an embryonic **transnational civil society**. In recent decades a plethora of NGOs, transnational organizations (from the International Chamber of Commerce, international trade unions, and the Rainforest Network to the Catholic Church), advocacy networks (from the women's movement to Nazis on the net), and citizens' groups have come to play a significant role in mobilizing, organizing, and exercising political power across

national boundaries. This has been facilitated by the speed and ease of modern global communications and a growing awareness of common interests between groups in different countries and regions of the world. At the 2006 Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Hong Kong, the representatives of environmental, corporate, and other interested parties outnumbered the formal representatives of government. Of course, not all the members of transnational civil society are either civil or representative; some seek to further dubious, reactionary, or even criminal causes while many lack

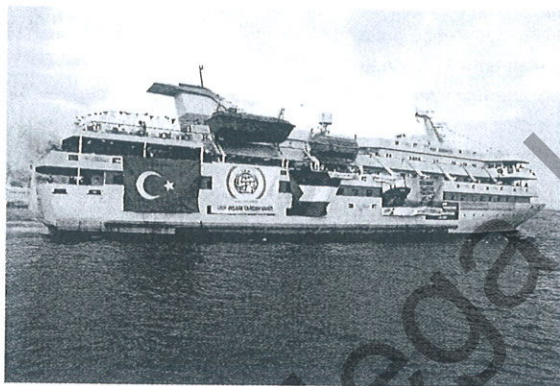
effective accountability. Furthermore, there are considerable inequalities between the agencies of transnational civil society in terms of resources, influence, and access to key centres of global decision-making. Multinational corporations, like Rupert Murdoch's News International, have much greater access to centres of power, and capacity to shape the global agenda, than does the Rainforest Action Network.

If global politics involves a diversity of actors and institutions, it is also marked by a diversity of political concerns. The agenda of global politics is anchored not just in traditional geopolitical concerns but also in a proliferation of economic, social, cultural, and ecological questions. Pollution, drugs, human rights, and terrorism are among an increasing number of transnational policy issues that, because of globalization, transcend territorial borders and existing political

jurisdictions, and so require international cooperation for their effective resolution. Politics today is marked by a proliferation of new types of 'boundary problem'. In the past, of course, nation-states principally resolved their differences over boundary matters by pursuing reasons of state backed by diplomatic initiatives and, ultimately, by coercive means. But this militaristic logic appears singularly ineffective and inappropriate to resolve the many complex issues, from economic regulation to resource depletion and environmental degradation to chemical weapons proliferation, which engender—at seemingly ever-greater speeds—an intermeshing of 'national fortunes' (see Case Study 2).

This is not to argue that the sovereign state is in decline. The sovereign power and authority of national government—the entitlement of states to rule within their own territorial space—is being transformed but

### Case Study 2 Gaza Freedom Flotilla



Free Gaza Movement/CC-BY-SA-2.0

On 30 May 2010 a flotilla of six ships with 700 passengers rendezvoused south of Cyprus, under the gaze of the world's media, with the declared intention of delivering 10,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the citizens of Gaza in support of UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009). However, since 3 January 2009 Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had imposed a sea blockade of Gaza to prevent the supply of arms and military equipment to the Hamas government following missile attacks on Israeli settlements and cities. To deliver its aid, the flotilla would have to either break through the blockade or hope the IDF would accede to its passage. Intense diplomacy involving the Turkish government, the principal NGOs organizing the flotilla, and the Israeli government had failed to prevent the sailing. In late May the prospect of a dramatic confrontation between the NGO 'Freedom Flotilla' and the IDF became the focus of global media interest.

On 31 May at 4.26 am Israeli forces, following a number of warnings, boarded and commandeered the ships of the flotilla in international waters. Nine people were killed on the *Mavi*

*Marmara* and many more were injured. This violent confrontation attracted international condemnation on all sides. The UN established a formal inquiry into the tragedy following commissions established by both the Turkish and Israeli governments, which came to opposing conclusions as to blame and legality. The UN inquiry reported in September 2011, concluding that:

'The events of 31 May 2010 should never have taken place as they did and strenuous efforts should be made to prevent the occurrence of such incidents in the future.' (p3)

The Freedom Flotilla has become a cause célèbre among many global activists and NGOs since it symbolizes the growing power and influence of global civil society actors in world politics. It was organized and financed by a coalition of NGOs committed to the Palestinian cause and humanitarian relief, although Turkish NGO, İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri Vakfı (IHH), a humanitarian organization which had consultative status with the UN ECOSOC, was the principal organizer. By drawing on soft power resources such as attracting global media attention to their cause, the Flotilla coalition sought to persuade governments and global public opinion to put pressure on the Israeli government to moderate the blockade. While this has not occurred, further threats in 2011 to mount another flotilla have kept the issue on the UN and global agenda. Although this case demonstrates the limits to NGO soft power, it also shows the limits to military power in so far as no solution to the Gaza issues appears in sight. The case of the Freedom Flotilla is a good illustration of the post-Westphalian architecture of today's global politics and the significance of global civil society actors, not just states. Similarly, it articulates the tensions evident in today's world between attachments to universal humanitarian principles and the traditional principle of 'might is right'.

*United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident, September 2011*

by no means eroded. Locked into systems of global and regional governance, states now assert their sovereignty less in the form of a legal claim to supreme power than as a bargaining tool, in the context of transnational systems of rule-making, with other agencies and social forces. Sovereignty is bartered, shared, and divided among the agencies of public power at different levels, from the local to the global. The Westphalian conception of sovereignty as an indivisible, territorially exclusive form of public power is being displaced by a new sovereignty regime, in which sovereignty is understood as the shared exercise of public power and authority. In this respect we are witnessing the emergence of a post-Westphalian world order (see Box 1.8).

Furthermore, far from globalization leading to 'the end of the state', it elicits a more activist state. This is because, in a world of global enmeshment, simply to achieve domestic objectives national governments are forced to engage in extensive multilateral collaboration and cooperation. But in becoming more embedded in frameworks of global and regional governance, states confront a real dilemma: in return for more effective public policy and meeting their citizens' demands, their capacity for self-governance—that is, **state autonomy**—is compromised. Today, a difficult trade-off is posed between effective governance and self-governance. In this respect, the Westphalian image of the monolithic, unitary state is being displaced by the image of the **disaggregated state**, in which its constituent agencies increasingly interact

**Box 1.8 The post-Westphalian order**

**Territoriality**

Borders and territory still remain politically significant, not least for administrative purposes. Under conditions of globalization, however, a new geography of political organization and political power (from transgovernmental networks to regional and global bodies) is emerging that transcends territories and borders.

**State sovereignty**

The sovereign power and authority of national government—the entitlement of states to rule within their own territorial space—is being transformed but not necessarily eroded. Sovereignty today is increasingly understood as the shared exercise of public power and authority between national, regional, and global authorities.

**State autonomy**

In a more interdependent world, simply to achieve domestic objectives national governments are forced to engage in extensive multilateral collaboration and cooperation. But in becoming more embedded in systems of global and regional governance, states confront a real dilemma: in return for more effective public policy and meeting their citizens' demands, whether in relation to transnational terrorism, the drugs trade, or the financial crisis, their capacity for self-governance—that is state autonomy—is compromised.

with their counterparts abroad, international agencies, and NGOs in the management of common and global affairs (Slaughter 2004) (see Fig. 1.3).

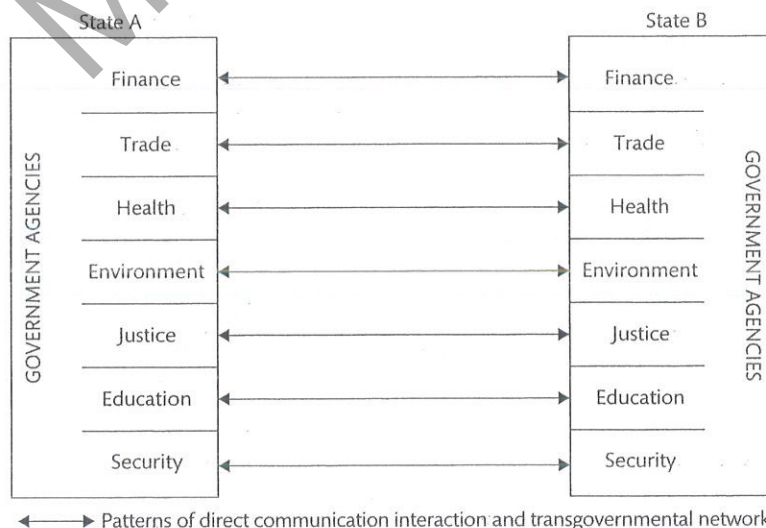


Figure 1.3 The disaggregated state.

Global politics is a term that acknowledges that the scale of political life has altered fundamentally: politics understood as that set of activities concerned primarily with the achievement of order and justice is not confined within territorial boundaries. As such it questions the utility of the distinction between the domestic and the foreign, inside and outside the territorial state, the national and the international, since decisions and actions taken in one region affect the welfare of communities in distant parts of the globe, with the result that domestic politics is internationalized and world politics becomes domesticated. Power in the global system is no longer the sole preserve of states, but is distributed (unevenly) among a diverse array of public and private actors and networks (from international agencies, through corporations to NGOs), with important consequences for who gets what, how, when, and where. Political authority, too, has been diffused not only upwards to supra-state bodies such as the European Union, but also downwards to sub-state bodies such as regional assemblies, and beyond the state to private agencies such as the International Accounting Standards Board. While sovereignty remains a principal juridical attribute of states, it is increasingly divided and shared between local, national, regional, and global authorities. In an age of globalization, national politics no longer function as bounded or closed systems. On the contrary, global politics asserts that all politics—understood as the pursuit of order and justice—are played out in a global context.

However, as with globalization, inequality and exclusion are endemic features of contemporary global politics. There are many reasons for this, but three factors in particular are crucial: first, enormous

inequalities of power between states; second, global governance is shaped by powerful interests and global capital; third, the technocratic nature of much global decision-making, from health to security, tends to exclude many with a legitimate stake in the outcomes. These three factors produce cumulative inequalities of power and exclusion—reflecting the inequalities of power between North and South—with the result that contemporary global politics is more accurately described as distorted global politics: ‘distorted’ in the sense that inevitably those states and groups with greater power, resources, and access to key sites of global decision-making tend to have the greatest control or influence over the agenda and outcomes of global politics. In short, global politics has few democratic qualities. Paradoxically, this sits in significant tension with a world in which democracy is highly valued. Whether a more democratic or just global politics is imaginable, and what it might look like, is the concern of normative theorists examined in later chapters in this volume (see Chs 13 and 33).

#### Key Points

- Globalization is transforming but not burying the Westphalian ideal of sovereign statehood. It is producing the disaggregated state.
- Globalization requires a conceptual shift in our thinking about world politics, from a principally state-centric perspective to the perspective of geocentric or global politics—the politics of worldwide social relations.
- Global politics is more accurately described as distorted global politics because it is afflicted by significant power asymmetries.

## Conclusion

This chapter has sought to clarify the concept of globalization and explain how it alters our understanding of world politics. It has argued that globalization reconstructs the world as a shared social space. It does so, however, in a far from uniform manner: contemporary globalization is highly uneven and it is as much a source of conflict and violence as of cooperation and harmony.

In focusing on the consequences of globalization for the study of international relations, this chapter has argued that it engenders a fundamental shift in the

constitution of world politics. Sovereign statehood is being transformed such that a conceptual shift in our thinking is required: from international (inter-state) politics to global politics—the politics of state and non-state actors within a shared global social space. Global politics is, however, imbued with deep inequalities of power such that it is more accurately described as distorted global politics: a politics of domination, competition, and contestation amongst powerful states and transnational non-state forces.