TOWARD a GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY?

At macro-global level of analysis, economic, political, and cultural activities may be more structured by organizations than in earlier historical periods. Vast networks of public, private & nonprofit orgs weave together local communities, nation-states, and transnational entities. A major task is to explain these emerging org’l forms, their diffusion, and the consequences of these trends for individuals and societies.

Two perspectives for investigating where macro-level org’l trends may be headed are civil society and globalization.
UN’s Concept of Civil Society

United Nations Development Programme’s Civil Society Division works with a differentiated conceptual framework. “The new task of UNDP … is to identify and work with all parts of the private sphere that can contribute effectively to [social & human development].”

Dynamic fuzzy boundaries of civil society at the interfaces of:

- Regime in power
- Public institutions & gov bureaucracy
- Governance system (the way politics and government interact)
- Market and its actors
- Affinities & obligations of (extended) families
Fuzzy Boundaries
Millennium Development Goals

UN Millennium Development Goals were adopted in 2002 by a consensus of experts from the UN Development Programme, OECD, IMF, and World Bank.

The goals for 2015:
1. Cut extreme poverty & hunger in half
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality & empower women
4. Reduce under-five mortality by 2/3rds
5. Reduce maternal mortality by 3/4ths
6. Reverse spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global development partnership - aid, debt

“[D]onor resources can play an important role in strengthening the ability to use resources effectively. This is a focus of UNDP work in many countries in partnership with governments, donors, and civil society.”

Are these goals Utopian? Cost estimates for meeting most MDGs by 2015 would require additional $50B/year in official development assistance – doubling current aid levels. No G-7 nation has reached agreed target of 0.7% of developed countries’ GNP (only Scandinavia & Netherlands have).
Origins of Global Civil Society

Many ideas about civil society orgs – voluntary, nonprofit, SMOs, activist networks – span local, national and transnational levels. Most CSO definitions exclude for-profit businesses & governments.

Coleman & Wayland’s two hypotheses on global civil society origins: gradual, rational process or recent contentious phenomenon?

- How has global capitalism stimulated a global civil society?
- Why is nonterritorial governance – CSOs interacting with states and IGOs – increasing within “transnational spaces”?
- Does it lead to a “growing consensus on a world culture” or to “greater consciousness of difference” among societies?
- What are CSOs’ impacts on the policy space for bioengineering, in such authority spheres as trade, food safety, intellectual property?
- What are the implications for democracy at the global level?
CSOs & Environmental Policy

Amazon case shows ways that CSOs can contribute to designing and implementing public policies aimed at stopping deforestation (Scholz)

1. Better environmental awareness than public actors (local & regional governments)
2. Build alliances & partnerships with federal & international environmental organizations
3. International networks strengthen policy capacities of both CSOs & public actors

How did Brazilian CSOs, such as peasant ass’ns & rural unions, mobilize to confront dam and highway construction projects?

What is the role of global and local alliances in increasing local environmental capacity?

How have weaknesses of local governments & judiciaries failed to stop deforestation?
Globalization Defined

Globalization refers to processes of increasing connections among societies & their people, institutions, organizations. Globalization creates economic, political, and cultural interdependencies that challenge traditional arrangements.

“The growing extensity, intensity, & velocity of global interactions can be associated with their deepening impact such that the effects of distant events can be highly significant elsewhere and specific local developments can come to have considerable global consequences.” (Held et al. 1999)

- Communication & transportation technologies compress and decouple time, geographic spaces, social distances (“global village”)
- National & regional boundaries grow increasingly permeable
- Cultural / identity groups become detached from their traditional territorial bases (the diffusion of supratenitoriality)
Players in the Globalization Game

- MNCs
- IOs
- INGOs
- SMOs
- CSOs
- States
Debate between Globalists & Skeptics

Globalists see convergence towards a common global society

- Capitalist networks of transnational economies reducing inequalities
- Eroding state sovereignty replaced by global governance structures
- Emergence of a global popular culture based on secular modernism

Skeptics see persistence of international system of societies

- New imperialism by regional economic blocs with conflicting interests
- Sovereign nation-states connected by intergovernmental relations
- Clashing cultures of revitalized nationalism, religious & ethnic identity
Debating Globalization

Class debate of globalists vs skeptics: What evidence favors each trend? What desirable or detestable consequences?

- Persistent religious ideologies and identities
- Labor outsourcing, porous borders
- Local community subcultures & institutions
- Widening poverty gap – haves vs have-nots
- Integrated communication networks deliver homogenized mass media
- Global diffusion of American popular culture (movies, music, & more)
- Rising prosperity leads to more leisure time for travel and tourism
- “All politics is local” – patriotic defenses of national sovereignty
- Environmental stress: work together for solutions or fight for survival?
Economic Globalization

By decoupling time and space, globalization increasingly integrates national economies into a complex world network:

- Expanded “free trade” markets for goods & capital; outsourcing of labor to lower-wage markets
- Lowered trade and tariff barriers (GATT, WTO, NAFTA); terms favor more powerful nations
- Producer and distributor markets dominated by supranational MNCs & banks; other nations’ firms can’t compete on uneven playing field
- Privatized formerly public services – telecoms, airlines, water – charge higher user prices to make greater profits
- National governments lack regulatory & enforcement powers to restrain foreign direct investors’ control over their economies
- Highly developed nations reduce their direct subsidies and foreign aid to developing nations
Water Barons at the Village Pump

Since 1990, six water utility firms won contracts for privatization of public waterworks affecting 300 million people in 56 countries.

Suez, Vivendi Environnement, Saur (France), Thames Water (Germany), United Utilities (UK), and Bechtel (USA) claim they’re more efficient and cheaper than often-corrupt public utilities.

Working with World Bank, the water barons lobby governments, trade & standards NGOs to change municipal and trade laws. By 2020 these firms may monopolize 67% of current public water.

“Critics say they are predatory capitalists that ultimately plan to control the world’s water resources and drive up prices even as the gap between rich and poor widens. The fear is that accountability will vanish, and the world will lose control of its source of life.” (Center for Public Integrity: www.icij.org)
Political Globalization

The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years’ War, destroyed the Holy Roman Empire and loyalty based on religion, creating today’s system of sovereign nation-states.

- No sovereign authority exists above nations
- National borders are absolute barriers against interference & intervention by outsiders
- National security requires international balance-of-power (ultimately, by threat of war)

Is globalization slowly eroding nation-state sovereignty?

Are new supranational orgs (EU, UN, NATO, World Court) constructing a multilateral, intergovernmental system?

Will international orgs acquire enough legitimate authority to gain control over the means of violence among nations?
Cultural Globalization

Globalization institutionalizes the diffusion of a secularized world culture, Western in origin, that trumps all alternatives.

“Globalization processes spread a legitimated world cultural order of universally accepted, rational, & democratic ideas reshaping national states, organizations, and individual identities.”

(John Meyer et al. 1997)

World-cultural values & norms creates isomorphism among:

- National constitutions everywhere adopt common institutions: citizenship rights, public education, health, pensions
- International organizations, especially the UN system
- Associations of scientific & professional experts
- Voluntary associations & social movement organizations
Bridging the Global Digital Divide

Despite global spread of communication & info technologies, the developing world still unconnected. Of 429M online globally, 41% in N. America, 30% Europe; 4% S. America, 1% Africa & Mideast

Greater IT access by poor nations is vital to their cultural & economic inclusion in global civil society – but who should own, control, pay for hard/software, Internet, databases?

- Market capitalism should determine who gets access to information
- Information is a global public good that must remain freely accessible and useable by all people
To Be Continued ...

The ultimate outcome of struggles between global, national, and tribal forces will not be decided within our lifetimes.

These conflicts will be fought by public, corporate, nonprofit, voluntary, social movement, & international orgs that mobilize huge economic & social resources for collective action.

Competition and cooperation among these organizations will continuously transform their structures, institutions, and cultures in a startling variety of unexpected ways.

Our daily lives will be shaped and reshaped by the networks of interorganizational relations in which we are embedded.

I hope this course provided many useful perspectives for your continuing efforts understand the world of organizations.