Chapter 4

Globalization: The Major Players

George M. Thomas

An area of study operating under the nominalization as powerful as 'globalization' is bound to be fraught with visions of larger than life forces, structures and processes that toss actors to and fro, from the small boats of individuals to ships of states. It also is understandable that there would be reactions against these visions – waves of attempts to re-centre discussions around the actions and agencies of individual actors as an antidote to the massive scale of globalization.

Whatever your take on these issues might be, it is important to understand the players involved in globalization and to understand that each is both actor and acted upon. It is not difficult to produce immediately a list of the players: nation-states, firms, international governmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), a host of other associations and individuals. It is a little more difficult to catalogue their interrelations and to understand who they are, what they are doing and why. That is, it is more difficult to delineate their identities, interests, actions and interrelations, and just how they relate to globalization and its processes.

It is reasonable to begin with one type of actor with clear identities and interests and then map out its relation to globalization – how it reacts and how globalization influences it. Those who study one type of actor, commonly states or firms, tend to depict that actor as the most important and simply as a given. This is very natural. It means that most studies of nation-states and firms as the drivers of globalization tend towards a realist theoretical position – a position that assumes particular actors with presumably clear, coherent interests.

Because of the nature of globalization, we take seriously how the world as a whole is influencing actors and how actors are interacting in a world context that is, or at least recently has become, out of the control of any set of actors. This means that there is a tendency to soften the assumptions about actors as free agents and to give more weight to the impact of global processes. Many still retain realist assumptions: actors with clear organizational interests find themselves reacting to more complex environments. Going a step further, we can point to how

globalization has an impact on the very identities and interests of actors. In this view, it is not only the global playing field that is continually shifting, it is also the nature of the state, firm, association and individual that is in flux.

In this chapter, I take up the various actors in turn and for each, begin with a realist view and then, following the scholarly and practical literatures, soften this approach to understand better their interrelations and the dynamics of globalization.

Strong Actors and Realist, Actor-centred Approaches

Transnational corporations

From the very origins of global capitalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, trading companies and financial houses which worked closely with mercantile states replaced the 'pre-national' guilds and trading leagues. They helped create global capitalism, and their descendants – modern corporations – continue to reproduce capitalism as they pursue their interests worldwide. Capitalist firms – corporate bureaucracies pursuing profit within competitive markets – are the bourgeois revolutionaries that range throughout the world, as so vividly depicted by Karl Marx. Corporations historically have had great influence over their states. In a classic overstatement, Marx depicted the state as the manager of capitalists' interests. In scholarly, policy and activist circles, they are the strong actors pursuing clear economic interests, influencing states and pushing globalization for good or for bad.

Transnational corporations are both competitive and collusive. Corporations that are able to gain competitive advantage, often through the policies and geo-military support of their states, become the most powerful players: they are able to bully and outdo competing corporations and have the greatest influence on states often at the expense of other corporations. At the same time, corporate capitalist interests confront state, society and local cultures as a united force of capitalists or 'big business'. This might at times be due to a unified corporate collusion or it might be more structural despite intense competition among corporations themselves. Their interests are, for example, directly tied to outcomes of globalization. It is wise to not treat corporate capitalists as a class as a singular unified actor but rather as a set of competing actors that have broadly common interests for pursuing profit and power, but it is an empirical issue and it must be documented to what extent they have formed coalitions for concerted action.

From the time of the mercantile state which actively managed markets for national interest through the *laissez-faire* nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, multinational corporations were linked to nation-states, supported by state policies and associated with nationalism and national development. While multinational in nature, corporations were vehicles for concentrating capital in their home state and furthering national development, at the expense of development in other countries. Dependency theorists pointed to this as the key mechanism for underdevelopment and poverty in regions throughout the world.

The influence of the well-known global corporations is difficult to overestimate, but they are only part of the picture. The familiar global firms are the historically

influential ones (General Motors and the auto industry), ones that make massive profits (ExxonMobil and the oil industry), those at the cutting edge of technology (Microsoft and computer hardware/software) and ones associated with consumer culture (McDonald's, Coca-Cola). Yet lesser known firms have tremendous power and influence: construction (Halliburton, Vivendi, Cemex); and consulting and accounting (PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu). Nearly invisible are the trading conglomerates (Mitsui, Mitsubishi), legal firms (Baker & McKenzie, White & Case) and other middleman companies.

Focusing exclusively on capitalist corporations, while natural and insightful, can be misleading because it is incomplete. Powerful corporations do influence state policies and gain advantage over other firms. Societal associations and local communities are no match for the political-economic clout and clear interests of these actors. But it is too easy and obvious an explanation that firms are the drivers of global capitalism and globalization. What this approach gains in its simplicity is offset by its underestimating the role of other powerful players, namely the state. Moreover, it has to be modified extensively to understand the intensity, speed and forms of globalization at the turn of the twenty-first century. Globalization has an impact on the very nature of firms: the striking thing about successful contemporary firms is not simply that they adapt through quick reactions to complex global environments (which they do), but also that they pioneer new organizational forms with flexibility and fuzziness built into their organizations.

States

The nation-state is the other obviously strong actor in the world. The titanic struggles of states and blocs of states are the stuff of history. The modern nation-state has many dimensions to it, and one or another has been used to define it: rational-legal authority, effective administrative control or monopoly of legitimate violence over a territory; the incorporation of a population through citizenship; the pursuit of national interest. The study of the world has been the study of international relations – that is, the relations among nation-states – rooted firmly in the real interests and interactions of nation-states. States act in national interests vis-à-vis other states, firms and domestic actors.

By focusing on the pursuit of national geo-political and economic interests on the global stage, observers tend to presume that states have a coherent set of national interests centred on military security and attained through force and realpolitik methods such as balance of power and coalition formation. States integrate the demands of domestic groups and the realities of geo-politics into coherent national interests. Meeting the demands of domestic groups might shape foreign policy and a state's pursuit of international interests might require national mobilization and centralization.

In state-centred views, nation-states are 'relatively autonomous' from firms and classes. They recognize the complex nature of state–firm relations and do not presume that states always follow the interests of powerful economic actors. On the contrary, state-centred theorists are quick to point to the progressive nature of the state as an agent of change: corporations were and continue to be as reactionary as much as they are revolutionary. While states depend on capitalist corporations

for revenues and competitive advantage, the capitalist firm also depends on state support. Since its origins in the centralizing monarchies in Europe, nation-states have established internal sovereignty over populations and territories even as they contend externally with other states. In the process, states were crucial in the rise of the capitalist corporation over the entrenched guilds and leagues, relying heavily on their revenues.

After World War II, and as nations became politically independent nation-states, they pursued interests of security, but an increasingly dominant *raison d'état* was development. States mobilize societies around national goals of economic development. They entice and coerce firms and classes to support national programmes and goals. They pursue development models set by international organizations such as the World Bank, models patterned after core industrial policies and articulated by Western academic economists. The mobilizing, modernizing state is the epitome of our understanding of the contemporary nation-state. In this view, the state is a relatively unitary, powerful apparatus imposing bureaucratic logics and control internally (Scott 1998) and competing externally around military, geo-political interests.

The realist view that the firm and the state are the most powerful global players dominates popular, policy, activist and scholarly discussions of globalization. In this view, states and firms, as they together use and expand new technologies, form the juggernaut known as globalization.

Strong actors and globalization

With increased globalization, the limits of this realist or actor-centred view have become more apparent, and there is a growing recognition that we have to understand how actors are shaped by global institutional environments. Many observers have emphasized that it is the very nature of globalization that requires firms and states to adapt and be flexible to new technologies and trends. The writings of Thomas Friedman (1999, 2005), for example, underscore the need for firms and states to see the technological and market trends and to position themselves to take advantage of them. The image of firms and states that one gets from Friedman's insights is not the rugged, autonomous actors anchored solidly from where they direct globalization but rather of ships of state and commerce that must weather raging storms at sea.

Today we observe firms from across the world looking for cheap labour and lucrative niche markets, not as Marx depicted as revolutionaries, but as adaptive players hoping to turn the short-term profit or meet their quarterly projections. Those who support the liberalization of markets (pro-globalization in the sense of an economic policy and thus better termed pro-globalism), such as the editors of the *Economist*, present this image by arguing that only the adaptive, flexible, innovative and opportunistic firms will survive. They also argue that states will produce wealth within their populations if they too have these adaptive qualities, opening themselves to globalization forces so as to take advantage of them. States, for example, must not protect national labour, but rather must adopt policies that take best advantage of global labour markets. Activists against the liberalization of

markets (referred to by the misnomer anti-globalization and better termed anti-globalism) tend to retain a more realist model, depicting a collusion of powerful firms and states that are able to structure global markets to their advantage. Even for these activists, however, the sense is that state and firms require expansive international organizations and institutions.

Globalization at the turn of the twenty-first century thus creates conditions in which the realist, actor-centred views are limited: the intensification of globalization reveals that these strong actors are reactive and adaptive to globalization processes.

World Contexts of Actors

This rethinking of actors and agency is taken further by those who argue that actors and their interests are themselves shaped by their environments. In other words realist, actor-centred views of global processes were always only part of the story, they argue, and this is more fully revealed by recent globalization. One line of argument is that global capitalism and the interstate system are global contexts that shape actors' identities and interests. A complementary line of argument is to see global contexts as world institutional and cultural structures.

According to neo-Marxist critiques of the autonomous actor, such as world-systems theory, firms and capitalists individually and as a class are embedded in processes of capital accumulation. The latter are determining. The interests, strategies and actions of states and firms as well as the ultimate outcomes are interpreted in terms of global exchange relations and flows of capital. Strong capitalists concentrated within a region and who benefit from unequal exchanges with other regions in the global division of labour are the source of strong states. These are the core countries over and against the periphery. Core countries are powerful and can have their way in the world-system, yet world-systems theorists are quick to point to the competition among core countries and the larger capitalist processes that make and break core states and firms.

State-centred theory and world-system theory have shifted their focus from individual states to the system of states (e.g. Chase-Dunn 1989; Wendt 1999). The policies and actions of states can be understood only as part of a system of states. The system rarely acts as an actor itself, although this line of thinking raises the issue of how states might associate, organize and act together, and opens an avenue for conceptualizing international institutions.

International institutions have garnered increasing attention. Scholars have been very cautious, initially extending conventional theories to conceptualize them. The most common interpretation is that as firms and states interact in increasingly complex environments marked by high levels of interdependence, simple interactions or exchanges cannot meet everyone's interests; that is, they cannot attain a social optimum. Thus there is a need to form institutions for coordination and control (Keohane and Nye 2000). In these observations, globalization is comprised of the most obvious forces of technology and economic flows, geo-political shifts and immigration flows: that is, material and social problems that have technical solutions requiring adaptation, coordination and control. Neoliberal theories see

this process as actors naturally creating norms and institutions – international organizations – in order to produce a social optimum. That is, under complex conditions in which everyday exchanges do not result in optimal outcomes for the players, they establish institutions that allow them to coordinate and control these complexities (Baldwin 1993). Neo-Marxist versions of this type of explanation have the same functional reasoning: powerful states and firms in the face of increased complexity find it necessary to increase coordination and control through the establishment of institutions. Institutions can take on a life of their own, affecting the incentive structures of states and firms, but in these views they have little agency that is not determined by the states and firms that created them or the powerful ones running them.

Amenable to the analyses of rational actors, institutions provide the incentive structures that shape the strategies and actions of states, firms and other actors. In short, there is great explanatory gain by allowing for complex, non-reductionist relations between the major players and their environments.

This trend towards understanding actors in their environments is furthered by conceptualizing actors' environments as cultural and institutional contexts, as argued by sociological institutionalism and constructivism in international relations theory. In these views, culture is not essentially comprised of values internalized by individuals and organizations. Rather, culture is comprised of institutions: cognitive models of and blueprints for reality in which identities are enacted and interests are pursued. Institutions are not natural reactions to complexity; rather, they are the assumed reality underlying actor identities and interests that define problems and their solutions. They are constitutive in the sense that they define the nature of the firm or state. These cognitive blueprints, moreover, are not only built into legal systems, they tend to have moral weight: pursuing interest, enacting sovereignty, and organizing for collective goals are virtuous and the means of progress. By maximizing our view that actors are embedded in institutional structures, this view shifts our attention to these institutional structures and to the sources of authority and agency that actors wield. It also broadens our view of actors other than states and firms (Meyer et al. 1997).

The concept of institution is somewhat distinct: any category, principle or model that is used to organize reality, identity and action (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Douglas 1966). Markets, following Karl Polanyi's (1944) early insights, are institutions. Contracts are institutions: culturally defined agreements bound by assumptions about reality (rational individuals and commodities) anchored in legal arrangements. Put another way, not only are the World Bank and World Trade Organization institutions, so also are private property, profit, chief executive officers and quarterly reports. Like other formal organizations, the identities, interests and formal structures of firms are shaped by their institutional environments. Lawyers, economists and consultants as well as psychologists, leadership gurus and motivational speakers are global-local actors propping up the firm.

This approach helps us to understand a peculiar aspect of business leaders: they adopt globalization strategies not only to survive, but also as a moral project. While the idea that what is good for business is good for the world certainly is a rhetorical device to legitimate all types of business practices and narrow interests, all evidence

suggests that they believe this: Max Weber's 'spirit of capitalism', that business is virtuous, is alive and well in the world (Hunter and Yates 2002).

The nation-state also exhibits these qualities. Historically the modern nation-state was consolidated by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) through which the boundaries and sovereignty of the different monarchies were recognized and the principle of territorial sovereignty was established. That is, it was the system of states that recognized both the general principles underlying nation-states and the particular monarchies and their boundaries. These arrangements embodied and derived from broader cultural imperatives inherited from Christendom: secular authority and thus every nation-state had the mandate and authority to establish peace and justice (Strayer 1970; Meyer et al. 1987). Their authority thus was anchored in external cultural understandings which eventually were woven into a narrative of progress. Monarchies consequently supported the arts and sciences as ways of displaying the legitimacy of their sovereignty (Wuthnow 1987; Drori et al. 2003). These monies did not begin to have material returns until the nineteenth century when the arts and sciences were linked to industry and research universities.

The mandate for peace and justice remains, although in the twentieth century it has transposed to 'development' and specifically economic development and gross domestic product per capita. The contemporary mandate for development is no less externally derived. State definitions and methods of development are highly stylized global models. For about a quarter century after World War II, the dominant model of national development was to industrialize to produce goods for domestic markets to be less dependent on export agriculture and on importing manufactured goods from developed core countries. In the 1980s there was a shift such that by the end of the Cold War free market liberalization or globalism – what often is referred to as globalization itself – came to dominate development models (McMichael 2004).

In myriad ways the state reacts to external demands requiring that it adopt, at least formally, policies in diverse areas: human rights, population policy, immigration, environment, education and labour. No state is able to deliver on all of these mandates. State agencies (e.g. ministries of the interior, energy, education and consumer rights) must each adapt to differentiated global policy sectors resulting in loosely coupled state agencies that often work at cross-purposes (e.g. economic development, environmental standards, education, rights). The image that emerges is a much more fractured, penetrated state than a highly integrated, coherent bureaucracy (Meyer 1999).

Pressing the constitutive nature and complexity of world contexts draws attention to the nature and sources of authority and actorhood which is important for understanding the nature of actors, the diversity of types of actors and the contentions over globalization. Rational-legal authority is the primary source of actorhood and agency for nation-states and for firms. We see, however, in addition what can be termed rational-moral authority that endows these actors with moral force. Rational-moral authority also encompasses a rational-voluntarism that animates a host of collectivist associations, including IGOs and INGOs. Associations of states, firms and individuals take on the role of a disinterested technical and moral expert that gives actors professional and moral guidance and accountability (Haas 1992; Meyer 1994; Boli and Thomas 1999).

Diverse Global Actors and Global Governance

The contextualization of strong actors opens up our understanding of what is happening 'beyond' the firm and the state. Greater attention is given to institutions not reducible to interests of strong actors and within which states and firms are embedded. This conceptual opening coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War which cleared space for the workings of more types of actors and also for observers without bipolar lenses seeing more clearly the diverse types of actors. Whatever one's understanding of actors and their environment, an increasing amount of scholarly, policy and practical work examines a full field of global players: IGOs, international courts, INGOs, a panoply of professional and legal actors, and their interrelations.

International governmental organizations

IGOs are created by states and have states as members. They are arenas for coordinating interactions and the organization of collective action. Taking a multi-layered approach that incorporates various theoretical perspectives: IGOs are influenced by powerful member states and internal politics, they take on a life of their own such that they constrain even powerful member states, and they confer collective purpose and legitimacy that shape and constitute even powerful member states. Put another way, IGOs are institutional arrangements created and used by state actors, are collective actors themselves, and they embody cultural assumptions about the world. They set global policies, provide incentive structures for states and other actors, and carry world cultural principles and models.

ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

Much attention is given to those IGOs that set global economic policy and thus are viewed as the most immediately responsible for globalization and its effects. Three organizations were established immediately after World War II: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The World Bank and IMF were created through the Bretton Woods agreements of 1944 and GATT was established in 1947 with several explicit purposes and practical effects: to reconstruct the world economy, provide support for national development, keep poorer peripheral countries within the capitalist world system and resistant to revolution, facilitate the flow of primary foods and materials from the periphery to the core and manufactured goods from the core to the periphery. Subsequent informal associations were formed. Developing countries in the 1960s formed the influential Group of 77 in an attempt to counter the deleterious effects of the economic system; this was followed shortly by the Group of 7 formed by core industrial countries (now the G8).

Economic liberalization in the 1980s began to replace the older national development models, and it was firmly established as orthodox economic policy after 1989. A series of meetings of GATT (known as the Uruguay Round) beginning in 1986

culminated in the creation in 1995 of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which became the primary organization that develops and enforces rules of free trade or liberalization. Contemporary free markets, as with their historical predecessors (e.g. Polanyi 1944), are created and managed by states and governance bodies. This fact is also seen in the creation of regional free trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the political processes and controversies surrounding the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Global policies are enforced or conformity is elicited through several mechanisms. Member states of the WTO and of regional free trade agreements are bound by the decisions of governing boards, and states are expected to act as enforcement agents of the decisions. Political manoeuvring to affect or undermine decisions and the influence of powerful states are typical, as in any political process. Loans from the IMF and World Bank are contingent on states adopting elements of the liberalization model, from economic to education policies. The prestige of participating in decision making, being a member in good standing and adopting the most cutting-edge models of development are general incentives for states. The elements imposed on states go beyond narrow economic policies. For example, by adopting world population policy principles, states signal that they are serious about development and receive more aid dollars from the United States (Barrett and Tsui 1999). When women's INGOs helped convince organizations like the World Bank that women's rights were important for development, these organizations made women's rights part of development programmes, thereby expanding women's issues across nation-states (Berkovitch 1999).

Contention over global economic policies generates a field of collective action – a global civil society (Scholte 2003). Activists (and many states) demand greater democratic participation and accountability and they demand a revision of liberalization policy to create more just outcomes. With the embodiment of liberalization policy in the WTO, longstanding activist contentions over global economic policy have come to focus on and target it. One by-product of this symbiotic relationship is that activists have gained greater visibility through their actions surrounding WTO meetings. Activist contentions over liberalization might threaten particular interests of powerful actors, but this contention tends to increase the visibility and significance of the organizations and policies, even as it creates a global public space. Anti-globalization activists, by targeting the WTO, the World Bank and other international organizations, are furthering the status of these organizations as the definitive arenas and actors involved in formulating world policies. Activists are anti-globalization in the narrow sense of being against economic liberalization or globalism, but they further globalization in the broad sense of legitimating the authority of international institutions: limiting authority and making it rationally accountable legitimates it.

UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations is the universal global political arena, comprised of politically independent nation-states. Within it we witness a full range of power politics, the creation of factions, coalition formation, the brokering of deals and betrayal. It is

strongly influenced by powerful states but is just as clearly relatively autonomous from them. For example, the United States can get its way in this and other global arenas, but it is just as evident that in many instances it cannot. While its power gives it a greater ability to not conform to any given UN resolution or declaration, there are costs involved and even the most powerful country in the world has to be strategic in its nonconformity.

Through its universalism and ideology of voluntary participation of all nations, the UN provides fundamental legitimacy and identity to states. This is most obvious in the myriad island societies that exist as modern nation-states primarily due to their membership in the UN. Legitimacy and prestige flow even to the most powerful through their participation in the UN and its functioning. Despite the prominent cases of states not conforming to UN resolutions and declarations, the degree of participation and at least formal conformity is striking. It helps too that resources also flow along with legitimacy. The mechanisms through which universalism and volunteerism operate are precisely the legitimacy and prestige of participating in the universal political arena.

The universalism and the ideology of voluntary participation – democracy, albeit very limited and open to a whole range of criticisms – provide the UN with the authority for collective action. As globalization intensifies, more and more global problems are identified and in each case something needs to be done by someone. In the absence of a world state that is authorized to take such action, the UN and, to a degree, regional organizations (from the European Union to the Organization of American States) are able to deputize actors to take action. States of course can take action without the formal sanctioning of the UN, and there are in fact many examples not the least of which is the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. But there are costs of legitimacy, support and resources: without a UN mandate, the actions are interpretable as furthering the particular interests of the actors whereas with such a mandate, the actors can sustain the claim of acting for the global collective good.

After the Cold War and especially with the scandal involving the Oil-for-Food Program with Iraq, the reform of the UN has emerged as a major global problem. Claims that the UN is unduly influenced by powerful Northern states, not representative and soft on corruption undermine the very basis of its authority – universalism, democracy, equality – and thereby question its ability to effectively deliver its goals of justice and development (Rittberger 2001). The UN's structure so reflects the particular immediate post-World War II world it would seem that such reform will have to be foundational. UN leaders, in turn, have argued for the need to strengthen the UN, largely in terms of the legitimacy of its use of force to establish peace and justice. Such reforms will likely be marked by many crises that will continually raise the questions, 'What must be done? Who must do it?'

International courts and tribunals

International law has expanded greatly, governing the interactions of states, firms and individuals. International courts were established after World War II, but case loads were light until the 1970s and 1980s. Courts early on had jurisdiction either between states (the International Court of Justice or World Court) or over individual

rights and in which individuals could appeal domestic cases (e.g. European Court of Human Rights). These courts have expanded to include individuals and groups taking foreign states to court. This process has advanced the furthest in Europe in which national courts draw on decisions from international courts and national legislatures craft laws with international law and precedents in mind. More recently, the claims of some national courts to universal jurisdiction and the establishment of the International Criminal Court mark steps beyond a state-centric legal model. Tribunals are *ad hoc* courts instituted to establish justice and give closure to particular incidents such as in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The imperative is that those who committed war crimes must be brought to justice, and these tribunals are the means to accomplish that.

Human rights treaties, like all international treaties, rely on states to implement international law, and international courts and tribunals depend on state cooperation for obtaining evidence, witnesses and even the accused. International courts and UN investigations are forced to rely on information from NGOs (e.g. Gaer 1996). States usually are at least formally and rhetorically committed to these institutions, but they might in fact act on countervailing interests. Furthermore, there is no capacity for the courts and treaty institutions to coerce states to comply with decisions. States not recognizing negative decisions by international courts and the fragility of the reach of tribunals are notorious. The Rwanda Tribunal, for example, is located in Arusha, Tanzania, and witnesses having to fly from Rwanda travelled at the mercy of the government (Peskin 2005). Certainly this speaks to the weakness of these global legal actors. Still, we see historically that the establishment of sovereignty by centralizing monarchies through the expansion of their judicial system was no less tenuous (Strayer 1970). The lesson we see is that if states strategically comply with some decisions but not others, over time there is an accumulation of legitimacy and recognition for the courts.

A lot of the success of the tribunals has to do with their ability to relate world legal procedures and principles to those of the local population experiencing the atrocities. The tribunal in Rwanda, for example, is extremely handicapped by its location in Arusha, Tanzania (Peskin 2005). This opens space for sub-national actors (tribal institutions or nations within nations) with alternative or complementary judicial mechanisms. Effective governance is that which bridges the local–global divide.

IGOs and international courts and tribunals are all creatures of the interstate system. States participate for a variety of reasons even if a narrow calculation of interests might make them hesitant. States, for example, strategize to be where the action is (to be at the table where decisions are made) in the hope of influencing future decisions and general directions of world institutions. Moreover, as states manage their identities in world society, they find it necessary to participate in civilized governance structures. Woven through the institutional incentives are the institutional sources of authority and identity. Rational-legal authority of the nation-state is implicated in the rational-moral authority of voluntary participation: the moral project of the nation-state is at risk if it will not participate in collective action. This interface between nation-states and world institutions is a major focal point of current research and policy analysis.

International non-governmental organizations and global civil society

INGOs are not-for-profit organizations not established or run by states. Those that attract the most scholarly, political and media attention are those such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund that mobilize collective action to influence states, international institutions and firms (Charnovitz 1997; Florini 2003; Guidry et al. 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Many others such as the International Organization for Standardization function behind the scenes working out legal, accounting, technical and ethical standards in many sectors (Loya and Boli 1999; Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000; Abbott et al. 2004; Prakash and Potoski 2006).

The growth and operation of INGOs have a close association with world society at large. The first modern INGOs emerged in the late nineteenth century and have experienced remarkable growth. Reflecting their correspondence to the interstate and world-economic systems, this growth was interrupted twice, first with World War I and then during the period marked by the Great Depression and World War II. Subsequently, there has been sustained phenomenal growth in the number of INGOs paralleling the growth in other global indicators such as world trade, energy production, interstate treaties and IGOs. They are everywhere and involved in all sectors of global policy (Boli and Thomas 1999). They elicit diverse responses from other players who view them as harbingers of a democratic global civil society, elitist autocrats imposing inappropriate universal plans on local settings or annoying busybodies.

Whatever their reputation, INGOs wield a substantial amount of influence. They lack, of course, rational-legal authority and for the most part they have little economic power, although large INGOs in the development sector mediate the administration of increasingly high amounts of development monies (e.g. Oxfam, CARE, Action AID, Catholic Relief Services). Their influence has its source in rational-moral authority deriving from their voluntarism. INGOs claim to represent and express universal human interests, are individualistic and democratic in their goals and organization, and are committed to global rationalism or progress. These principles are woven together and embodied in the authorizing of individuals as world citizens to act globally (Boli and Thomas 1999). In practice, they provide expertise, sometimes in the form of abstract scientific knowledge (e.g. about the ozone), sometimes in the form of information (e.g. the disappearance of political dissidents), and thereby have an impact on the decisions of other players (Haas 1992; Gaer 1996). They provide this expertise to the full range of actors, and their relationship with the UN can be formalized in gaining official consultative status. Their neutrality and disinterestedness except for the common good is crucial to their ability to have morally compelling influence (Meyer 1994).

At the most general level, INGOs frame global policy issues within different issue areas. Women's INGOs historically have framed the nature of and arguments for women's rights, ranging from protection early in the century to labour issues to individual rights (e.g. the International Council of Women, International Federation of Working Women, Women's International Democratic Federation, International Women's Rights Watch) (Berkovitch 1999). INGOs shaped population policies at

the turn of the twentieth century in terms of neo-Malthusian principles and then eugenics (International Union of Scientific Investigation of Population Problems); after World War II, INGOs such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation framed the anti-natalism of development and individual choice (Barrett and Frank 1999). INGOs (e.g. World Education, Action Aid International) spread the gospel of education reform throughout the world (Spring 2004), and myriad INGOs frame issues and amass scientific evidence concerning environmental issues (Frank et al. 1999; Wapner 1996).

The trend in activist INGOs is to cooperate in supermovements. Cooperatives and associations of INGOs form within and across functional issue areas. This trend has been transformed qualitatively by the World Social Forum (WSF). The WSF was established in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001. It has grown from 5,000 participants at that meeting to tens of thousands of official delegates and participants by 2004 in Mumbai and 2005 in Porto Alegre. The qualitative difference with the WSF is its claim to be not an actor *per se* but a formal civil society space for groups and movements to come together. It has resisted (not without substantial internal controversy) taking political positions or making political pronouncements (Patomäki and Teivainen 2004).

INGOs target nation-states directly in a 'top-down' fashion, but they also become involved with domestic movements. They work from the top down in part by linking state purposes and policies to universal models of progress and moral principles. INGOs often attempt to mobilize directly domestic groups and thereby become involved in national and local power politics. Conversely local and national groups including indigenous peoples attempt to gain leverage over their states by involving INGOs (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Brysk 2000). This is not without tension because some domestic groups might prefer different frames and strategies than those espoused by INGOs and their local partners.

INGOs also target IGOs such as the UN, the World Bank and the WTO, with some acting as consultants working closely with them and others as activists attempting policy reform. Given their influence, affecting their policies has ripple effects throughout the world. When, for example, women's rights and development became intertwined within the UN through the work of many INGOs in the 1970s, women's issues such as education and labour force participation diffused throughout the UN and became global priorities (Berkovitch 1999). The World Bank uses development INGOs as experts to help administer development money locally. At the same time, activist INGOs attempt to influence World Bank 'best practices' that stipulate how development and education reform projects are to be worked out. Not all movements are success stories. Labour as an international player (e.g. International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) is active in lobbying IGOs such as the International Labor Organization and WTO, but it has had limited success in an environment dominated by liberalization policies (O'Brien 2004).

INGOs play an important role in the operation of international courts. Indeed, they were active in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (Potec 2003; Tornquist-Chesnier 2004). For courts in general, but especially in cases in which states are accused of rights violations, INGOs are crucial. In the absence of state cooperation, INGOs are the primary alternative source of information (Peskin 2005). Amnesty International, for example, is able to draw on volunteers to provide

evidence and find and deliver witnesses, well beyond the limited resources of the courts or UN agencies and against the obstruction of states (e.g. Gaer 1996).

There is a dense network of states, firms, IGOs and INGOs that work together across global policy issue areas, technical sectors and markets to develop and institute standards ranging from measurements and labels to safety and to ethical accountability. The diverse actors form a variety of governance structures (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000; Abbott et al. 2004). Two major players in standardization are the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) that have published, respectively, over 9,000 and 3,000 sets of standards. But they are only the major players in a dense network of a myriad of organizations (Loya and Boli 1999).

Firms comply with these standards for a variety of reasons. Technical, ethical and accountability standards are fundamental rules of the game and thus there is overriding pressure for actors to participate. Focused pressure also occurs; for example, in the case of ethical standards, diverse organizations such as the Global Compact function as moral entrepreneurs that put pressure on firms, bringing to bear global public opinion (Colonomos and Santiso 2005). Yet firms have strong interests apart from such pressures. By signing onto technical standards, they are able to function in an interdependent world. By meeting environmental, safety, ethical and accounting standards, they are able to display to other actors, including clients and customers, that they are responsible partners. Because of the nature of commodity chains, the compliance of one firm has ripple effects. A corporation marketing products in the United States, for example, that has been awarded an ISO 14001 certificate for environmental standards, will require all of its suppliers throughout the commodity chain reaching across many countries to be so certified (Prakash and Potoski 2006).

Actors beyond the nation-state, especially IGOs, INGOs and professional associations, in many respects are qualitatively different from other actors. As first described by John Meyer (1994, 1999), they exist and act to tell actors such as states, firms and individuals how to act, how to be proper players. To press the metaphor of player, they themselves are not players; if actors are players in the field or on the court, then these others are more like coaches, referees, groundskeepers, sporting associations and committees, sportswriters, impresarios, physical therapists, agents and advertisers. They are consultants, experts and advisers. IGOs prescribe goals and policies; INGOs advise actors and monitor their performance; professionals and intellectuals (economists, scientists, lawyers and academics) articulate models and give advice on implementing them.

Other players

The interactions of states, firms, IGOs and INGOs are complex enough, but things are even more complex because the distinctions among these different types of actors can become fuzzy. In a study of standardization, Abbott et al. (2004) depict a triangle with the vertices representing states, NGOs and firms. There are unambiguous examples of each of the three types of actors, but this framework reveals hybrid types of actors. For example, the Council for Environmentally Responsible Economies is comprised of investor groups and environmental INGOs. The Global

Compact is a hybrid of state and firm that was created to address issues of globalization and accountability. Its formation was at the initiative of the UN with voluntary participation by firms with a lesser involvement of NGOs. The Kimberly Process, formed to address conflict or 'blood' diamonds, was a multi-stakeholder initiative of states, INGOs and firms. While INGOs go out of their way to remain independent of states and firms to maintain their claim to disinterested universalism, hybrid actors attempt the same thing by bringing the various players together.

A significant trend in governance is toward regionalism, both supra- and sub-national. One aspect of globalization is the direct (i.e. not mediated by the nation-state) links between local actors and the global field. Cities, for example, directly market themselves and their industries throughout the world. There has been a proliferation of national and local NGOs that often cluster around INGOs. Large development INGOs, for example, will bring a large amount of international money into local contexts (e.g. in India) giving rise to the creation of local entrepreneurial NGOs attempting to partner with them. This interface between the large INGO and the local indigenous NGO is a major source of both cooperation and conflict.

Religious organizations, groups and movements are important players. Like INGOs, many influential ones work quietly behind the scenes whereas a few that politically engage nation-states or attempt to appeal to global public opinion attract more attention. Many religions are themselves transnational organizations, from the Roman Catholic Church to the Assemblies of God to smaller international denominations. Other religions such as Sunni Islam or Shi'a Islam, despite not having a singular bureaucratic organization, are transnational in scope and action. Important mainline religious organizations, such as the World Council of Churches, are comprised of different religions and have long histories, but they tend to lack the influence of individual charismatic leaders such as Bishop Tutu or the more revivalistic religions. Religious organizations that press for religious revival tend to be involved in missionary activity throughout the world, and missionary boards within Christianity have been global players for centuries. More recently religious organizations that tend toward religious revival (Evangelical Protestant or schools within Islam) have been able to mobilize and target issues of interest. For example, at population conferences, typically the Roman Catholic Church, associations of Evangelical Protestants and Muslim clerics lobby IGOs and states. Obviously, those organizations that politically mobilize violently attract more attention and arguably are having a profound impact in global civil society. Nevertheless, one of the most important ways in which religious players have an impact on the global field is through their sponsorship of a range of humanitarian, relief and development INGOs such as Catholic Relief Services: they have been in the vanguard of innovations in this area (Mei 2003).

Terrorist groups since the end of the Cold War have become prominent players and some such as Al-Qaeda can be conceptualized as a type of INGO. Terrorist groups have been especially innovative in organizational structure and use of the global media to further global agendas. Al-Qaeda seemingly has developed into a franchised brand name with local, loosely affiliated cells taking on the *modus operandi* of the brand name. This is not to be dismissive or flippant, but to acknowledge the fluidity of this and other organizational players.

Individuals

The tendency is to think of individuals at the 'micro' level of interactions that comprise collective actors that are global players. But this is a false distinction. Certainly the meeting of the United Nations Security Council or the board of directors of a transnational firm is just as micro as any face-to-face interaction among a small group of people. The distinction is 'as whose agent is the person acting?' As part of globalization and global rationalism, the individual is viewed as a global citizen with the authority and obligation to act globally. The modern markers that demarcate the individual are still largely national (censuses, public opinion surveys, passports), but individuals are important actors as they organize globally.

Intellectuals of all stripes are especially influential individuals. Professionals, lawyers and scientists are highly organized, and have influence through their INGOs; for example, there has been a substantial increase in the number of science INGOs oriented to social problems (Schofer 1999). It is important, however, to recognize their impact in the form of individual works, writings and lectures through which they articulate world principles and the interests of diverse players. This conjunction of charismatic individual and member of a profession and organization produces powerful players and scripts of world citizenship on the world stage. Religious personages are especially notable, even though they receive little attention in the scholarly literatures. Pope John Paul II worked to present himself as the first among world citizens; the Dali Lama also. Others such as Bishop Tutu and Mother Theresa combine a spirituality with working through situations of suffering, service and reconciliation. Many celebrities, often rock stars such as Bono, have also come to embody world citizenship.

Conclusions

There are a large number of important global players and a range of types of actors. Ability, authority and obligation are important dimensions of global players: players vary in their degree and extent of power, they exhibit different types of authority, and they to varying degrees all present their actions and purposes as moral projects. Our understanding of states and firms as the strong players in history forming the juggernaut of globalization has been furthered by acknowledging their embeddedness in global contexts and appreciating the complexity of those contexts. This, in turn, has called attention to the many important others: international governmental organizations, international courts and tribunals, international non-governmental organizations, intellectuals and world citizens. Early polemics about whether these other players are in the game only at the whim of powerful states and firms have given way to empirical studies of just how they operate, influence other actors and play a role in globalization processes.

The world is dominated by rational-legal authority and by rational-moral authority. States and firms are firmly anchored in rational-legal authority, technical rationality and science. We now have a better understanding that they also derive rational-moral authority, defining their goals and interests in terms of moral progress.

We also have a clearer picture of the myriad collective actors driven by the rational-moral authority of their universalism and volunteerism.

The sea-wave that is globalization is such an inexorable force in part due to the imperative for collective action. A good part of the dynamism is of course due to the seemingly unbridled agency to pursue individual interest, but it is unlikely that we would be witnessing the intensity and scale of globalization – the consciousness of one world in one time and one place as described by Roland Robertson (1992) – to the degree that we do without this imperative for collective action that views that unbridled quality as a problem. Individual players are authorized to discover problems and to take action to solve them, resulting in a continual uncovering of social problems – gaps between discursive claims and on-the-ground reality. There are the gaps between global ideals of peace, justice, progress, equality and democracy on the one hand and the way things actually work and turn out on the other. And there are the related problems of the players themselves: accountability, corruption, global–local tensions, implementation and compliance. What must be done? Who must do it? We understand a little better that all types of players and others equipped with technical and moral authority have the agency and obligation to ask, and answer, these questions.

References

Abbott, K.W., Sceats, S. and Snidal, D. 2004. 'The governance triangle: States, firms, NGOs and global business standards'. Paper presentation, Roundtable on Interdisciplinary Approaches to International Law, Vanderbilt University Law School, 12–13 November.

Baldwin, D.A. 1993. *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barrett, D. and Frank, D. 1999. 'Population control for national development: From world discourse to national policies'. In J. Boli and G.M. Thomas (eds), *Constructing World Culture*, 198–221. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Barrett, D. and Tsui, A.O. 1999. 'Policy as symbolic statement: International response to national population policies', *Social Forces*, 78, 213–34.

Berger, P. and Luckman, T. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Berkovitch, N. 1999. *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Boli, J. and Thomas, G.M. (eds.) 1999. *Constructing World Culture: International Non-governmental Organizations since 1875*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Brunsson, N. and Jacobsson, B. 2000. *A World of Standards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brysk, A. 2000. *From Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Charnovitz, S. 1997. 'Two centuries of participation: NGOs and international governance', *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 18 (2), 183–286.

Chase-Dunn, C. 1989. *Global Formation: Structures of the World Economy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Colonomos, A. and Santiso, J. 2005. 'Vive la France! French multinationals and human rights', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27 (4), 1307–45.

Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Drori, G.S., Meyer, J.W., Ramirez, F.O. and Schofer, E. 2003. *Science in the Modern World Polity: Institutionalization and Globalization.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Florini, A. 2003. *The Coming Democracy: New Rules for Running a New World.* Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Frank, D., Hironaka, A., Meyer, J., Schofer, E. and Tuma, N. 1999. 'The rationalization and organization of nature in world culture'. In J. Boli and G.M. Thomas (eds), *Constructing World Culture*, 81–99. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Friedman, T. 1999. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree.* New York: Anchor Books.

Friedman, T. 2005. *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Gaer, F.D. 1996. 'Reality check: Human rights NGOs confront governments at the UN'. In T.G. Weiss and L. Gordenker (eds), *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance*, ch. 2. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Guidry, J.A., Kennedy, M.D. and Zald, M.N. (eds.) 2000. *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power, and the Transnational Public Sphere.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Haas, P.M. 1992. 'Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination', *International Organization,* 46 (1) Winter, 1–35.

Hunter, J.D. and Yates, J. 2002. 'In the vanguard of globalization: The world of American globalizers'. In P. Berger and S.P. Huntington (eds), *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*, 323-57. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. 1998. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Keohane, R. and Nye, J. 2000. *Power and Interdependence*, 3rd edn. New York: Longman.

Loya, T. and Boli, J. 1999. 'Standardization in the world polity: Technical rationality over power'. In J. Boli and G.M. Thomas (eds), *Constructing World Culture*, 169–97. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

McMichael, P. 2004. *Development and Social Change,* 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Mei, Y. 2003. 'The changing discourse of international humanitarian charitable-relief NGOs'. Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University.

Meyer, J. 1994. 'Rationalized environments'. In W.R. Scott and J.W. Meyer (eds), *Institutional Environments and Organizations*, 28–54. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Meyer, J. 1999. 'The changing cultural content of the nation-state: A world society perspective'. In G. Steinmetz (ed.), *State/Culture*, 123–43. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Meyer, J.W., Boli, J. and Thomas, G.M. 1987. 'Ontology and rationalization in the Western cultural account'. In G.M. Thomas, J.W. Meyer, F.O. Ramirez and J. Boli (eds), *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society and the Individual*, 12–27. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Meyer, J., Boli, J., Thomas, G.M. and Ramirez, F.O. 1997. 'World society and the nation-state', *American Journal of Sociology*, 103 (1), 144–81.

O'Brien, R. 2004. 'Continuing incivility: Labor rights in a global economy', *Journal of Human Rights*, 3 (June), 203–14.

Patomäki, H. and Teivainen, T. 2004. 'The World Social Forum: An open space or a movement of movements?' *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (6), 145–54.

Peskin, V. 2005. 'Trials and tribulations: International criminal tribunals and the politics of state cooperation'. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.

Polanyi, K. 1944. *The Great Transformation.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Potec, L. 2003. 'Transnational advocacy networks as agents of change in international relations: The case of the coalition for an international criminal court'. Paper presented at the

meetings of the Central and East European International Studies Association, Budapest, Hungary, 26–28 June.
Prakash, A. and Potoski, M. 2006. *The Voluntary Environmentalists: Green Clubs, ISO 14001, and Voluntary Environmental Regulations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).
Rittberger, V. 2001. *Global Governance and the United Nations System*. New York: United Nations University Press.
Robertson, R. 1992. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Schofer, E. 1999. 'Science associations in the international sphere, 1875–1990: The rationalization of science and the scientization of society'. In J. Boli and G.M. Thomas (eds), *Constructing World Culture*, 249–66. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Scholte, J.A. 2003. *Democratizing the Global Economy: The Role of Civil Society*. Coventry: Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation.
Scott, J.C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Spring, J. 2004. *How Educational Ideologies Are Shaping Global Society: Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs, and the Decline of the Nation-state*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Strayer, J.R. 1970. *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Tornquist-Chesnier, M. 2004. 'NGOs and international law', *Journal of Human Rights*, 3 (2), 253–63.
Wapner, P. 1996. *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Wendt, A. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wuthnow, R. 1987. *Meaning and Moral Order*. Berkeley: California University Press.