OUTLINE THREE
Political Dimensions of Globalization

1. What Is POLITICAL GLOBALIZATION? Political globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of political interrelations across the globe. Political globalization has been much discussed in the globalization literature where the emphasis has been on the decline of the nation-state under the impact of global forces, which have created different kinds of politics arising from, on the one hand, the development of transnational networks and flows, and, on the other, processes of de- and reterritorialization. For some, processes of political globalization open up new emancipatory possibilities, while for others globalization leads to a loss of autonomy and the fragmentation of the social world. Political globalization can be understood as a tension between processes which interact to produce the complex field of global politics.

GLOBAL GEOPOLITICS. One of the most pervasive forms of political globalization is the worldwide spread of democracy based on the parliamentary nation-state. Democratic government exists in some form in most parts of the world and where it does not, as in China, there is a considerable demand for it by democratic movements. This is a territorially based kind of globalization and largely confined to the political form of the nation-state. It takes traditional forms as well as constituting a new kind of global geopolitics. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the communist regimes in Europe after 1991, democracy has become the universally acceptable form of government. In this sense then, globalization does not undermine the democratic nation-state but gives it worldwide acceptability. The United Nations, which is largely based on nation-states, may represent this global political order.

GLOBAL NORMATIVE CULTURE. This is independent of geopolitics and is largely legal but diffused in global political communication. One of the main expressions of this is human rights, which lies at the center of a global cosmopolitanism [ideology that all human beings belong to a single community, based on a shared morality], but it also includes environmental concerns, which are now global. It is also a dimension of globalization that is not specifically Western. The sovereignty of the state has been challenged by the rights of the individual leading to tensions between peoplehood and personhood. States were once the main agents of global norms, but today a global normative culture has come into existence beyond the state system and exists in a relation of tension with states. For politics this means that political struggles and legitimation are ever more connected to global issues. It means that counterpublics ["parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn...\]
permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs”) as well as states will be shaped by it.

POLYCENTRIC NETWORKS. Polycentric networks are forms of non-territorial politics which emanate from a multiplicity of sites and which cannot be reduced to a single center. These processes of political globalization are associated with networks and flows, new sources of mobility and communication, and denote new relationships between the individual, state and society. A different kind of global political order can be associated with the notion of global civil society. A global civil society has come into existence around international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), various grass-roots organizations and social movements of all kinds ranging from globally organized anti-capitalist protests to social movements such as the World Social Forum, Greenpeace, Doctors without Borders. One of the distinctive features of global civil society is that it does not have one space but many; it is polycentric and not based on any single principle of organization other than the fact that it is globally organized through loosely structured horizontal coalitions and networks of activists.

2. EMERGENCE OF MODERN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY. The PEACE OF WESTPHALIA (1648), which ended the Thirty Years’ War, is regarded by many as the key event ushering in the contemporary international system. The Peace established the right of the German states that constituted the Holy Roman Empire to conduct their own diplomatic relations. They were also formally stated to enjoy 'an exact and reciprocal Equality': the first formal acceptance of sovereign equality for a significant number of states. More generally, the Peace may be seen as encapsulating the very idea of a society of states. The participants very clearly and explicitly took over from the Papacy the right to confer international legitimacy on individual rulers and states, and to insist that states observe religious toleration in their internal policies. While the emergence of the Westphalian model did not eclipse the transnational character of vast imperial domains overnight, it nonetheless gradually strengthened a new conception of international law based on the principle that all states had an equal right to self-determination. According to political scientist David Held, the Westphalian model contained the following essential points:

a. The world consists of, and is divided into, sovereign territorial states which recognize no superior authority.
b. The processes of law-making, the settlement of disputes, and law enforcement are largely in the hands of individual states.
c. International law is oriented to the establishment of minimal rules of co-existence; the creation of enduring relationships is an aim, but only to the extent that it allows state objectives to be met.
d. Responsibility for cross-border wrongful acts is a ‘private matter’ concerning only those affected.

e. All states are regarded as equal before the law, but legal rules do not take account of asymmetries of power.

f. Differences among states are often settled by force; the principle of effective power holds sway. Virtually no legal fetters exist to curb the resort to force; international legal standards afford only minimal protection.

g. The collective priority of all states should be to minimize the impediments to state freedom.

The FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789) had profound consequences for international society. First, the revolutionary insistence that sovereignty was vested in 'the nation' rather than the rulers gave a crucial impetus to the idea of 'national self-determination'. Nations are a people defined by linguistic, ethnic, and cultural bonds. Second, the leading states increasingly set themselves apart from the smaller ones as a kind of great powers' club. This system, known as the 'Concert of Europe', lasted until the First World War. It was characterized by regular meetings of the club, with the aims of maintaining the European balance of power and reaching collective decisions on various potentially divisive issues. The leading dynastic powers, Austria and Russia, wanted the Concert to give itself the formal right to intervene in any revolution. This was strongly resisted by Britain, which was the least threatened by revolution, on the grounds that such a move would violate the key principle of nonintervention.

The First World War brought an abrupt end to the Concert of Europe. New powers, notably the USA and Japan, had appeared and there were increasing demands for national liberation in India and other parts of the European empires. There were deliberations to set up the world's first multipurpose, universal international organization, the League of Nations, in 1919. The League was based on a new principle of collective security rather than a balance of power. The central notion here was that all states would agree in advance to unite against any act of aggression. This, it was hoped, would deter any potential aggressor. Second, League membership was worldwide, not merely European.

World War II (1939-1945) pitted two major politico-military alliances: the Allies (U.S., Britain, France, USSR, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Yugoslavia) and the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria).

A better version of the League was the United Nations, which begun operation on October 24, 1945. It is organized on the basis of the nation-states that are its members (there were 193 member states in 2018). As a "state-centric" organization, the United Nations is a global setting in which nation-states meet and deliberate; it is also an independent actor. In practice, however, the UN was very seldom able to play the leading
role envisioned for it in the post-war international society, largely because the Cold War prevented agreement between the two most important members of the Security Council, the USA and the Soviet Union.

The **Cold War** was a state of political hostility between the Soviet Union with its satellite states (the Eastern bloc) and the US and its allies (the Western bloc) from 1946 to 1991 characterized by threats, propaganda, and other measures short of open warfare. The countries that were generally aligned with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO-an intergovernmental military alliance) and opposed to the Soviet Union during the Cold War were called “**First World**;” the industrial socialist states that were under the influence of the Soviet Union were called “**Second World**;” and, the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, not aligned with either the first or second worlds were called “**Third World**.”

As globalization tendencies grew stronger during the 1970s, it became clear that the international society of separate states was rapidly turning into a global web of political interdependencies that challenged conventional forms of national sovereignty. In 1990, at the outset of the Gulf War, US President George H. W. Bush effectively pronounced dead the Westphalian model by announcing the birth of a ‘new world order’ whose leaders no longer respected the idea that cross-border wrongful acts were a matter concerning only those states affected.

### 3. Political globalization and global governance

Political globalization is most visible in the rise of supra-territorial institutions and associations held together by common norms and interests. In this early phase of global governance, these structures resemble an eclectic network of interrelated power centers such as municipal and provincial authorities, regional blocs, international organizations, and national and international private-sector associations.

On the municipal and provincial level, there has been a remarkable growth in the number of policy initiatives and trans-border links between various sub-state authorities. An example of international cooperation on the municipal level is the rise of powerful city networks like the **World Association of Major Metropolises** (or Metropolis) that develop cooperative ventures to deal with common local issues across national borders. Metropolis is an organization of more than 120 cities across the world, with a mission of connecting political leaders, policy makers and practitioners worldwide in order to advocate metropolitan interests and improve the performance of metropolises in addressing local and global challenges.

On the regional level, there has been an extraordinary proliferation of multilateral organizations and agreements. Regional clubs and agencies have sprung up across the world, leading some observers to speculate that they will eventually replace nation-states as the basic unit of governance. For example, the **European Union (EU)**, which
began in 1952 as the European Coal and Steel Community, an organization of six European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany) formed to regulate their industrial production under a centralized authority. In 1958, the European Economic Community (EEC) was created increasing economic cooperation between six countries. In 1993, EEC was renamed EU. What began as a purely economic union has evolved into an organization spanning policy areas, from climate, environment and health to external relations and security, justice and migration. EU has 28 member states as of 2018. EU plays an important role in diplomacy and works to foster stability, security and prosperity, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law at international level. Moreover, collectively, the EU and its constituent countries is the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid supporting over 120 million people each year.

On a global level, governments have formed a number of international organizations, including the UN, NATO, WTO, and OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Full legal membership of these organizations is open to states only, and the decision-making authority lies with representatives from national governments.

Global governance is also shaped by the "Global Civil Society". A civil society is defined as: the process through which individuals negotiate, argue, struggle against, or agree with each other and with the centers of political and economic authority. It is a realm in which people can engage one another more or less directly and in which they can, among other things, analyze and criticize their political and economic institutions. People can do this, and thereby act publicly, by acting through voluntary associations, movements, parties, and unions. An example is the World Social Forum (WSF), which is an annual meeting of civil society organizations, first held in Brazil (in 2001), which offers a self-conscious effort to develop an alternative future through the championing of counter-hegemonic globalization. WSF participants continue to discuss ways to confront the dictatorship of the financial system, the imperialism of transnational corporations, the oppression of authoritarian regimes, the enslavement by the media, the culture of patriarchy and racism. They discuss alternative proposals for building more just and sovereign societies, access to knowledge and technologies and protection of the planet’s resources. (See Chapter 7: Justice Globalism of the required text for more information)

From the WSF Charter of Principles:

1. The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences, and interlinking for effective action by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism and are committed to
building a planetary society directed toward fruitful relationships among humankind and between it and the Earth.

8. The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, confessional, nongovernmental, and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organizations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world.

13. As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society that—in both public and private life—will increase the capacity for non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing.

4. **THE UNITED NATIONS.** The United Nations (UN) is made up of a group of international institutions, which include the central system located in New York, the specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Programmes and Funds, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is the only global institution with the legitimacy that derives from universal membership, and a mandate that encompasses security, economic and social development, the protection of human rights, and the protection of the environment.

The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945 by fifty-one countries, as a result of initiatives taken by the governments of the states that had led the war against Germany and Japan. By 2013, 193 countries were members of the United Nations, with South Sudan as the UN's newest member following its independence from the rest of Sudan in 2011.

According to the United Nation Charter, the UN had four purposes: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. At the UN, all the member states—large and small, rich and poor, with differing political views and social systems—had a voice and a vote in this process.

The UN has five main organs: the Security Council (SC), the General Assembly (GA), the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

**THE SECURITY COUNCIL.** The UN Security Council is given the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It was made up initially of eleven states, and then, after 1965, of fifteen states. It includes five permanent members, namely the USA, Britain, France, Russia (previously the Soviet Union), and China, as well as ten non-permanent members. Decisions of the SC are binding, and must be passed by a majority of nine out of the fifteen members, including each of the five permanent members. When the SC considers a threat to international peace, it first explores ways
to settle the dispute peacefully. It may suggest principles for a settlement or may suggest mediation. In the event of fighting, the SC tries to secure a ceasefire. It may send a peacekeeping mission to help the parties maintain the truce and to keep opposing forces apart. It can, for instance, impose economic sanctions or order an arms embargo. On rare occasions, the Security Council has authorized member states to use all necessary means, including collective military action, to see that its decisions are carried out. The Council also makes recommendations to the General Assembly on the appointment of a new Secretary-General and on the admission of new members to the UN.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. All UN member states are represented in the General Assembly—a ‘parliament of nations’—which meets to consider the world’s most pressing problems. Each member state has one vote. A two-thirds majority in the GA is required for decisions on key issues such as international peace and security, the admission of new members, and the UN budget. A simple majority is required for other matters. However, the decisions reached by the GA have only the status of recommendations, rather than binding decisions. The GA can consider any matter within the scope of the UN Charter such as information and communication technologies for development, the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, international drug control, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Since GA resolutions are nonbinding, they cannot force action by any state, but its recommendations are important indications of world opinion and represent the moral authority of the community of nations. The GA also has a number of subsidiary bodies, including the International Law Commission, the Disarmament Commission, and the Human Rights Council.

THE SECRETARIAT. The Secretariat carries out the substantive and administrative work of the United Nations as directed by the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the other organs. It is led by the Secretary-General, who provides overall administrative guidance. The Secretariat consists of departments and offices with a total staff of 40,000 around the world. The role of the Secretariat remains primarily bureaucratic, and it lacks the political power.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL. ECOSOC, under the overall authority of the General Assembly, coordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations and the UN family of organizations. It also consults with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), thereby maintaining a vital link between the United Nations and civil society. ECOSOC’s subsidiary bodies include: Functional Commissions, such as the Commission on the Status of Women; Regional Commissions, such as the Economic Commission for Africa; and other bodies. Along with the Secretariat and the General Assembly, ECOSOC is responsible for overseeing the activities of a large number of other institutions known as the United Nations system (i.e. the Specialized Agencies and the Programmes and Funds). ECOSOC was not given the necessary management powers. It can only issue recommendations and receive reports from the Specialized Agencies.
THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE. The International Court of Justice is the main judicial organ of the UN. Consisting of fifteen judges elected jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Court decides disputes between countries. Participation by states in a proceeding is voluntary, but if a state agrees to participate, it is obligated to comply with the Court's decision. The Court also provides advisory opinions to other UN organs and Specialized Agencies on request.

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