Democracy, Global Governance and Peaceful Change[1]

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Abstract

Democracy, global governance and peaceful change are often assumed to be mutually supportive aspirations. This chapter considers the arguments put forward in favour of this assumption, encompassing not only the prospective relationship between peaceful change and national democracy but also the presumed role in facilitating peaceful change of conceptions of democracy in global governance and in transnational relations. Each of these arguments is critiqued, and the article concludes by elucidating the limited role in peaceful change of democracy, whether it is considered at the national level, or in global governance and transnational relations. The analysis considers peaceful change in both minimalist conceptions centred on war prevention and maximalist conceptions concerning the advancement of global justice, and it evaluates the roles of both established and emerging powers.

Keywords

Democracy, Global Governance, Transnational Relations, Peaceful Change, International Institutions

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Introduction

In evaluating the relationship between democracy, global governance and peaceful change, this chapter proceeds from state-centric through to transnationally-oriented perspectives. It commences by considering the ways in which this relationship was addressed in early literature on peaceful change. The chapter then considers the long-standing debates with respect to the role of national democracy and democratization in facilitating peaceful change, before proceeding to explore the role in peaceful change of international institutions and processes of global governance and their democratization. Tensions between democratic practices at national and global levels are evaluated, as are the relations between democratic and non-democratic actors. The analysis culminates in the consideration of the prospects for the facilitation of peaceful change in world politics through processes bypassing states and embedded in transnational institutions and democratic practices. The chapter not only outlines but also critiques the arguments put forward suggesting the facilitative role of democracy and global governance in peaceful change, and the conclusion delineates the ways in which democracy and global governance may serve as obstacles to peaceful change.

The Debate in Historical Perspective

The prospective relationship between democracy, international institutions, and peaceful change has long been recognized. In one of the earliest volumes in English specifically on the subject of peaceful change, Charles K. Webster (1937: 4) highlighted the importance in driving interest in peaceful change of "world public opinion", the role of which in world politics at the time was often conflated with international democracy (Zimmern, 1928: 187). Moreover, as this chapter will elucidate, national democracy and democratic international governance may be interpreted as potentially facilitative of peaceful change in each of the conceptualizations Webster (1937: 5) put forward, from narrow understandings centred on

peaceful change to prevent war, through to more expansive understandings emphasizing peaceful change in the pursuit of justice and "a world order better adapted to the changing material and mental processes today".

Among authors considering peaceful change in the interwar years, Alfred Zimmern (1930, 1936) was especially notable for emphasizing democratic practices at not only the national level but also internationally in the institutions of the League of Nations and its liaison practices with non-state actors (Davies 2012). In looking to the combination of national and international levels, Zimmern echoed earlier Kantian thought emphasising the role of both republican forms of government and their voluntary federation in the facilitation of a more pacific international order (Markwell, 1986: 287). However, critics such as Edward Hallett Carr (1936, 1939) highlighted the tensions at the time between satisfaction of democratic demands at national and international levels. In arguing that there was "no more urgent problem, if peace is to be preserved and democracy survive, than what is known as the problem of peaceful change" (Carr, 1936: 860), Carr stressed the problem of "mistakenly tying values such as democracy to the status quo" (Kristensen, 2019: 19).

National Democracy and Peaceful Change

Traditional understandings of democracy have emphasised institutional practices at the national level. Measured in terms of "institutionalized procedures for open, competitive, and deliberative political participation", open and competitive chief executive selection procedures, and "checks and balances on the discretionary powers of the chief executive", democracy at the national level is now understood to be evident in the majority of countries (Center for Systemic Peace, 2017: 29-31). The apparent "transformation of the global system from a predominately autocratic to a predominately democratic system of states" (Center for Systemic Peace, 2017: 32) since the 1980s may be interpreted as having significant

consequences for peaceful change in respect of both minimalist conceptualizations centred on war prevention and maximalist conceptualizations emphasizing the promotion of global justice and addressing common global challenges.

With respect to minimalist conceptions of peaceful change for the facilitation of war avoidance, the spread of democratic regimes at the national level in multiple countries may be understood to have contributory potential in several aspects. Some of the most fundamental of these relate to the propositions that underpin the democratic peace hypothesis that in its principal (dyadic) variant asserts that democratic states are less likely to go to war with one another than with other regime types on account of their institutional and normative constraints (Russett, 1993). Drawing on Kant's assertion that polities where "the consent of the citizens is required … would be very cautious … [in] decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war", it has been argued that constitutionally secure liberal democracies may be predisposed to alternative means of dispute settlement among one another rather than resorting to the use of force (Doyle, 1983: 229). With the spread of democratic regime types, therefore, it has been asserted that there may be an expanding "zone of peace" consisting of liberal/democratic states with an "inherent disposition for peaceful settlement of their disputes" (Kacowicz, 1994: 237).

As for maximalist conceptions of peaceful change emphasizing the promotion of international justice and the development of common solutions to global problems, the spread of democratic regime types is also thought to be a significant contributory factor. In Kantian perspectives, pacific relations among republican states are understood to be facilitated not only by their domestic norms and institutions but also through their development of an international "pacific union" (Doyle, 1983: 226). In practice, it may be argued that democracies have developed among themselves "pacific unions" at the regional level whereby a wide range of common problems are addressed and conceptions of international

justice pursued, with the most prominent example being the institutional framework of the European Union for which "stable institutions guaranteeing democracy" are a condition of participation (Brown, 2014: 680). In the case of some other regional organizations, universal democratic membership is often a significant aspiration, with for example the African Union's 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance promoting "adherence, by each State Party, to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights" (Engel, 2019: 130).

At the global level, many of the pre-eminent institutions of global governance for the management of global problems originated primarily in the policy initiatives of apparently democratic states, most notably the basic infrastructure of the United Nations Organization, with the first draft of the United Nations Charter being developed by the United States State Department in 1943 (Russell, 1958). The foundation of its predecessor, the League of Nations, is also widely attributed to Woodrow Wilson's proposal for a global organization and his emphasis on the "partnership of democratic nations" as the basis for a "steadfast concert for peace" (Smith, 2017, 21).

Although the League of Nations and the United Nations were also rooted in "great power" politics and continued some of the practices of the earlier Concert system (Rittberger, Zangl, Kruck and Dijkstra, 2019: 31-35), the role of less powerful democratic states in initiating the development of institutions of global governance should not be underestimated, with the process leading to the creation of the International Criminal Court being spearheaded by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Arthur Robinson in 1989 (Schiff, 2008: 37). In the present day, democratic emerging powers such as South Korea and Indonesia have become significant centres for international institutions addressing contemporary challenges, with for example the Green Climate Fund and the United Nations Office for Sustainable

Development headquartered in Incheon, and with Jakarta serving as a hub for numerous South East Asian intergovernmental organizations.

There are, however, numerous problems with the assumption that the spread of democratic national regime types may facilitate a world order in which disputes are settled by peaceful means, and justice promoted through shared institutions of international governance. One cluster of problems relates to the assumption that democratic regime types will continue to spread in an expanding "zone of peace." In recent years, it has been common to observe in place of the spread of democratic regime types, a trend towards "democratic backsliding," with Freedom House observing in 2019 a "13th consecutive year of decline" and "democracy … in retreat", with the share of "Not Free" countries rising to 26 per cent (Freedom House, 2019: 1). Although in many cases "democratic backsliding" refers to the rise of "illiberal democracy" rather than reversion to authoritarianism (Zakaria, 1997; Plattner, 2019), this is nevertheless significant, since the assumptions behind the "democratic peace" hypothesis tend to rest not only the presence of democracy, but specifically of liberal democracy (Doyle, 1983; Kacowicz, 1994). In this context, it is significant that one of the principal instances of "democratic backsliding" is understood to be the United States under Donald Trump, with the United States having previously been considered by some to have been "liberty's clear champion" (Patrick, 2020).

A second cluster of problems relates to the processes by which states may transition from authoritarian to democratic regime types. In many cases, transitions to democratic regime types have taken place through largely peaceful processes of change, with numerous examples being provided in most of the transitions in central and Eastern Europe from Soviet to democratic governance in the late twentieth century (Roberts, 1991), as well as in cases of civil resistance campaigns around the world, from the "people power" revolution in the Philippines in 1986 through to the democratic transition in Tunisia following the 2011

uprising (Chenoweth 2014). Each of these may be interpreted as successful examples of peaceful change through "'induction' – that is to say, assisting change through the magnetic power of example", with for example the Helsinki process and the appeal of European Union membership appearing to play significant roles in peaceful change to democratic regime types in central and eastern Europe (Roberts, 2006). However, democratization processes are not always pacific, and it has been claimed that in the "transitional phase of democratization, countries become more aggressive and war-prone" (Mansfield and Snyder, 1995: 5).

The most significant set of problems with assumptions concerning the relationship between the spread of democratic regime types and the prospects for peaceful change relates to the relationships between democratic states and those that fail to meet standards of democratic governance (commonly labelled "autocracies" or "anocracies"). It is widely acknowledged that democratic states have frequently engaged in armed conflict with non-democratic states (Quackenbush and Rudy, 2009), commonly including the use of pre-emptive force, as undertaken by the United States in relation to Iraq in 2003, Libya in 2011, and Iran in 2020, in the second of these instances in conjunction with other democratic states (Manjikian, 2016).

Moreover, with respect to the prospects for peaceful change in terms of peaceful management of the rise of emerging powers, the democratic peace hypothesis has little to offer. Although three of the so-called BRICS – Brazil, India, and South Africa – are understood to meet criteria for consideration as "democratic" or "free" countries (Center for Systemic Peace, 2017; Freedom House, 2019), these are by far the least powerful of the five, especially in military terms (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019), and the first two of these in recent years have demonstrated "democratic backsliding" under Bolsonaro and Modi, respectively (Freedom House, 2019). More significantly, China and Russia are widely considered to be "autocratic" and "anocratic" regime types, respectively (Center for

Systemic Peace, 2017), which in recent years have undertaken reforms exacerbating their already low status on indices of freedom (Freedom House, 2019).

The growing international position of China and Russia represents not only a rising counter-weight to the purported "zone of peace" among apparently established democratic states, but also increasingly a challenge to the institutions of global governance that originated in democratic national contexts. Many of the most significant institutions of international governance in the twenty-first century have their roots not in democratic regimes, but rather in authoritarian contexts, notably the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that was established in 2001, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that was launched by China in 2015-6 and has been viewed as a rival to the Bretton Woods institutions (Hameiri and Jones, 2018). An increasingly popular notion is the claim that the "Washington Consensus" of the older international financial institutions is being superseded by a less liberal "Beijing Consensus" embedded in the newer institutions (He 2018, xvii).

At the same time, purportedly established democracies such as the United States and Great Britain have undermined some of the older institutions of international governance through the pursuit of unilateral initiatives such as the interventions in Iraq in 2003, Libya in 2011 and Iran in 2020, and by withdrawing from international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations Human Rights Council (in the US case) and the European Union (in the British case). With the development of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis, institutions of global governance became victims of struggles between democratic and undemocratic states – most notably that between the United States and China – with the United States withholding funds from the World Health Organization on 14 April 2020 on account of its alleged complicity in the initial suppression of information on the spread of the novel coronavirus within China (Hameiri 2020).

Although some institutions of international governance through which peaceful change in the maximalist sense is pursued – especially at the regional level such as the institutions of the European Union – require democratic practices among their members, these tend to be exceptional. Even at the regional level, some of the intergovernmental institutions established among emerging powers have been critiqued for their failure to address the democratic deficiencies of their members – a charge especially commonly levelled at ASEAN (Poole 2016). Moreover, the European Union is also increasingly coming under scrutiny for its failure effectively to address the democratic backsliding of member states such as Poland and Hungary (Baer 2020).

A final set of problems associated with drawing implications for peaceful change from the apparent spread of democratic regime types at the national level relates to the limited scope of the conceptualization of democracy involved in predominant understandings of the democratic peace proposition. As the subsequent sections will outline, it is necessary in the context of contemporary globalized world politics to turn to conceptualizations of democracy that encompass political relations between and across states, and not only within them.

Democratic Global Governance and Peaceful Change

To conceive of democracy in contemporary world politics exclusively within the confines of national institutions is wholly inadequate in the context of a global political order in which few issues and decisions affecting the lives of ordinary people operate exclusively at the national level. This is a concern which has long been recognized, with Alfred Zimmern observing in his pioneering work in the 1920s that in aiming to address global problems with national institutions states were effectively "attempting to do twentieth century work with eighteenth century instruments" (Zimmern, 1929: 319). In place of nationally-oriented

conceptualizations of democracy, Zimmern urged instead understandings taking the global context into account: Zimmern (1929: 368) argued democracy is "an association, precarious yet ever renewed, between all the many and varied groups that make up the sum of the world's public opinion." In the post-Cold War era, very similar arguments were to be put forward among scholars of global governance, with Kaldor (2008: 35) highlighting the contrast between "formal" understandings of democracy embedded in national political institutions and "substantive" understandings that are better related to the context of globalization and which emphasize processes within and beyond the state level "for maximising the opportunities for all individuals to shape their own lives and to participate in and influence debates about public decisions that affect them". As Zimmern (1930: 7) asked: "must we cease to conceive of democracy as a participation by the ordinary citizen in the work of government and acquiesce in a definition under which it means no more than that the elector exercises a choice, at stated intervals, between two or more rival groups of rulers?"

Democracy at the global level may be understood in a broad array of conceptualizations varying from those with a narrow focus on the decision-making procedures of intergovernmental organizations, to expansive understandings encompassing the practices of a wide range of public and private actors. In the thinnest conceptualizations, global-level democratic processes might be assumed to operate in the decision-making procedures of intergovernmental institutions which offer all states – regardless of military or economic capability – an apparently equal voice in decision-making, such as the one-member-one vote approaches of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Ministerial Conference and the General Council of the World Trade Organization (Moore, 2005). Such an approach, however, has little to offer in respect of understandings of democracy in the "substantive" sense, overlooks the considerable variations in the size of populations represented by different states, and neglects the ways the operational practices of

such organizations may marginalize the voices of developing countries and their populations (Joseph, 2011).

In the burgeoning literature on global governance of the post-Cold War years, more expansive understandings of global-level democracy were put forward, often with an emphasis on mechanisms for ensuring the "democratic accountability" of intergovernmental organizations. For Keohane (2011: 101-103), this involves intergovernmental organizations upholding certain minimum standards of moral conduct, inclusiveness, integrity, and transparency, and being responsive and beneficial to stakeholders. For Scholte (2004), on the other hand, there is an emphasis on the roles of civil society organizations in facilitating the democratic accountability of intergovernmental bodies, such as through promoting transparency, monitoring policy, pursuing redress, and advancing formal accountability procedures. In the case of the boldest conceptualizations of democracy at the global level, authors such as Archibugi and Held (1995) have put forward models of global "cosmopolitan democracy" in which democratic practices are advanced at global, regional, national, and local levels on the basis of subsidiarity, involving the most appropriate public and private bodies in respect of any given issue, ensuring civil society participation, and avoiding singular hierarchies.

The implications of democratic global governance for peaceful change might be assumed to be far-reaching. In the most widely accepted definition of the term, global governance is understood to encompass "the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs … a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken … [that] includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest" (Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 2). The concept of global

governance may be considered inherently to assume the possibility of peaceful change in the maximalist sense whereby global problems may be addressed, international justice pursued, and the social, cultural and economic foundations for pacific international relations laid through the co-operative endeavours of public and private bodies.

The literature on global governance that has been produced over the last three decades has posited a diverse array of dynamics by which global governance is understood to facilitate peaceful change in this maximalist sense. The most traditional are rationalist approaches emphasising how international institutions overcome collective action problems by providing a "shadow of the future" enabling international cooperation on diverse problems around which actors' interests converge (Keohane and Martin, 1995; Abbott and Snidal, 1999). More popular in the present day are constructivist perspectives claiming that institutions of global governance involve the development and implementation of shared understandings of common solutions to common problems, with a prominent role ascribed to "norm entrepreneurs", which are often non-state actors (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998), and to the bureaucracies of international organizations (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). Significantly, the role of democracy scarcely features in these arguments, although the literature on democracy in global governance tends to assume that the potential for global governance effectively to facilitate change in these ways is enhanced by ensuring legitimacy through claims to democratic accountability.

In recent decades, peaceful change in the maximalist sense might be interpreted as having been facilitated by global governance institutions across a wide range of issue areas. In the field of global health for instance, the combined efforts of a diverse set of public and private institutions including UNAIDS, the World Bank, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation among others may have contributed towards the decline of global HIV infection and AIDS death rates since 2004 (UNAIDS, 2019: 6). In the environmental sector, the

diminishing gap in the Ozone layer may be attributed to the coordinated efforts of businesses such as DuPont, governments, and intergovernmental organizations in developing the Montreal Protocol limiting CFCs, where the dovetailing of public and private calculations of interests appears to have been particularly significant (Maxwell and Briscoe, 1997). For those emphasising the importance of non-state "norm entrepreneurs" in the advancement of international change, a popular example has been the successful non-governmental campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Court, which is often considered to have revolutionized sovereignty and international law through the prosecution of individuals at the international level (Glasius, 2006). On a broader scale, the United Nations celebrated in 2015 the work of its institutions in what it claimed was "the most successful anti-poverty movement in history", the Millennium Development Goals, which it claimed "helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet" (Ban, 2015a: 3).

Despite apparent achievements such as these, global governance remains limited in scope. The most extensive and effective frameworks for multilateral cooperation on issues of common concern are regional rather than global, such as the institutions of the European Union. Moreover, many of the apparent successes of global governance may be attributable primarily to initiatives at the national rather than global levels: the global reduction in extreme poverty rates over the last two decades, for example, may be primarily the result of domestic economic growth in a limited number of countries, most notably in China (Sundaram, 2016). Furthermore, the apparent successes of global governance in facilitating progressive change may be substantially outnumbered by the failures, even in respect of the Millennium Development Goals (Hickel, 2016). In some areas – especially indicators of women's equality – minimal progress appears to have been made, with the 20-year progress report on implementing the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action highlighting

that “overall progress … has been unacceptably slow, with stagnation and even regression in some contexts” (Ban, 2015b: 5).

With respect to narrower conceptions of peaceful change focused on procedures for war avoidance, the role of global governance may be similarly limited. The peaceful change provisions in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter are subject to the veto of the five permanent members of the Security Council, thereby limiting their applicability only to those without the veto (Tanaka, 2018: 80). Through the privileges accorded to veto-bearing states, the structure of the Security Council effectively embeds the status quo rather than facilitating peaceful change, and efforts towards Security Council reform have made minimal progress. Even with respect to the management of disputes between non-veto-bearing states, the United Nations has tended to be more successful in short-term preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping rather than long-term peace-making and peace-building (Merrills, 2017: 273).

While acknowledging that global governance may facilitate limited peaceful change, the role of democracy in enabling peaceful change through processes of contemporary global governance is questionable. As was noted in the previous section, many of the most significant recent global governance initiatives – such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank – have been developed and led by non-democratic states. Even those institutions of global governance which have their roots in large part in democratic contexts are significantly lacking with respect to democratic representation at the global level, with permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council limited to just five states, and voting in the Bretton Woods institutions weighted by financial contributions, thereby systematically marginalizing the voices of populations in developing countries, although these states have a greater say in other United Nations organs such as the General Assembly and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Leech and Leech, 2006: 27).

It would appear that there is a fundamental tension between democracy at the national level in countries such as the United States, Great Britain, and France, and democracy at the global level in the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, where these states occupy privileged positions and are reluctant to facilitate reform, whether to accommodate rising powers, or to facilitate greater voice for populations of less powerful nations. As Lake (2009: 139) has argued, institutions of international governance may need to be understood as embedded within global hierarchies by which dominant states provide services to other states in exchange for their compliance. The democratic deficit in the United Nations Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions is evident not only in the asymmetric voting procedures of these institutions, but also in their lack of responsiveness to civil society (Scholte, 2011).

Newer institutions of global governance such as the G20 may be considered better to reflect the changing distributions of power in the international system by giving a greater voice for "middle powers" such as South Korea and South Africa. However, the G20 also faces a democratic deficit given the exclusion of most countries from participation, and it has proven ineffectual in bringing about cooperation and change, for instance in response to COVID-19 (Jain, 2020). Given the limited democratic accountability and effectiveness of the principal intergovernmental institutions of global governance, it is worthwhile to consider democracy beyond states in the transnational arena, and its implications for peaceful change.

Transnational Democracy and Peaceful Change

In the context of processes of globalization, the roles of states and intergovernmental bodies in managing global issues and facilitating change may be increasingly challenged by the roles of private international actors. Nearly a century ago, Zimmern (1929: 318-319) recognized this problem, highlighting that democracy had "a new Opposition to face" in the form of

"private power" which had developed the world economy into a "single unit": "a great and widespread new system corresponding with some approximation to our modern economic needs" but operating "outside the constitution" and challenging the "eighteenth-century instruments" of states. According to Zimmern (1931: 8; 1929: 342, 352), democracy in this context needed to be advanced through the work of "international voluntary societies" and "non-governmental experts" that would "recover control over private power" and "extend their influence right down to the common man and woman."

In the present day, a wide range of democratic practices are understood to operate beyond states through the activities of private international associations, transnational social movements, and other voluntary initiatives. In the most conservative of these frameworks, democracy is understood to be facilitated through the engagement of multiple stakeholders in private regulatory regimes. "Stakeholder democracy" in the contemporary era has been considered to have been advanced in a diverse range of transnational governance initiatives bringing together business and civil society actors in overseeing global standards of good practice on issues such as labour conditions and environmental sustainability (Bäckstrand, 2006). Besides engagement of stakeholders, there has been emphasis on the democratic accountability of international non-governmental organizations and transnational businesses through their adherence to private international standards of accountability and transparency such as those of the Global Reporting Initiative and Accountable Now (Crack, 2018).

More radical approaches to transnational democracy emphasise the practices of transnational social movements. Mobilizations such as the World Social Forum and Occupy have been considered to pioneer novel forms of participatory and deliberative democracy in their purportedly non-hierarchical and non-institutionalized approaches to self-organization (Smith et al., 2014). The World Social Forum, first organized in Brazil in 2001 and bringing together civil society and social movement actors from around the world, made much of its

leaderless composition and horizontal approach to organization, as did the later Occupy movements which organized sit-ins in public spaces around the world in 2011 that claimed to function as "horizontal, mutualistic" spaces providing "a new way of participating" (Fuchs, 2014: 64). In their elucidation of alternatives to contemporary modes of living, social movement mobilizations such as these have been understood to embody "radical" democratic ideals (Conway and Singh, 2011). Social movement experiments in new approaches to decision-making have also been considered to constitute "prefigurative politics" with the potential to serve as models for more democratic forms of social and political organization in wider society (Van de Sande, 2013).

The repercussions of purportedly democratic practices beyond the state for peaceful change may be significant. It has been argued that these practices potentially address the democratic deficit that is otherwise evident at the global level: given the unfeasibility of developing representative democratic institutions at the global level analogous to those within democratic states, these practices are thought to provide "a medium through which individuals can, in principle, participate in global public debates" and offer "the possibility for the voices of the victims of globalization to be heard if not the votes" (Kaldor, 2003: 148). This, in turn, may help address some of the grievances that might otherwise spill over into armed conflict. Moreover, for some post-Cold War theorists, non-state democratic practices contribute towards the development of a "global civil society" with the potential to offer an "answer to war" through the substitution of state-centric world politics – where the principal actors still make claims to legitimate use of violence – with civil non-state action (Kaldor, 2003: 32). In this line of argumentation, peaceful change in the maximalist sense is facilitated through non-state participatory democratic practices that address common problems across diverse issues in place of the practices of states that would traditionally handle them through legislation.

An alternative approach to considering the role of transnational democracy and transnational governance in peaceful change is to draw attention to the role of institutions of transnational society in developing a parallel "transnational order" to the "international order" understood in English School literature to have been developed among states (Bull, 2012). For example, it has been argued that just as states have developed institutions of mutual recognition, dispute resolution, authoritative communication, and standards of appropriate conduct that enable order in the international society of states, transnational actors have also developed institutions of mutual recognition, dispute resolution, authoritative communication, and standards of appropriate behaviour that facilitate a parallel "transnational order" that enables non-state actors to achieve their primary goals and to constitute and regulate transnational society (Davies, 2019). Posited examples include the reporting standards of the Global Reporting Initiative in providing common standards of conduct and mutual recognition among subscribing transnational corporations and non-governmental organizations, and the private International Court of Commercial Arbitration in settling disputes among non-state actors (Mattli 2001). The development of institutions of "transnational order" has been claimed to be significant for peaceful change, since it is argued that – rather than posing a potentially disruptive challenge to state-centric international order – the rise of transnational actors is being at least in part self-managed by these actors through non-violent processes embedded in the institutions of transnational society (Davies, 2019: 287).

Even if one rejects the notion that non-state actors have developed "global civil society" or "transnational order", it may at least be argued that transnational actors have developed procedures for facilitating change without violence that bypass states altogether. Wapner (1995), for example, has highlighted the role of consumer activist pressure in transforming the practices of corporations, the contributions of non-governmental

organizations' initiatives to community empowerment, and the influence of social movements' campaigns on public behaviour, all of which have achieved change in some instances without the use of violence and without the direct involvement of states or intergovernmental organizations. Examples Wapner cited include the role of consumer activist pressure in leading McDonalds to transform its packaging practices, and the adoption of recycling practices by private individuals in response to environmentalist activist pressure despite the absence of government legislation on the issue at the time.

The limits to transnational democracy and its potential contributions to peaceful change are, however, considerable. For a start, the extent to which the transnational sector is characterized by democratic practices is extremely limited. Advocacy non-governmental organizations which are commonly credited with giving voice to marginalized populations often have opaque and hierarchical structures of internal governance with significant deficiencies in the accountability of their leaderships to their members (Archer, 2003), while humanitarian non-governmental organizations have frequently been criticized for prioritizing accountability to donors (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards, 2015). Even purportedly "horizontal" social movement mobilizations such as Occupy have been critiqued for in practice being dominated by those holding privileged positions in facilitating communication (Kavada, 2015). Transnational corporations, on the other hand, are widely criticized for their undemocratic nature, given their principal accountability to shareholders rather than to other stakeholders (Joo, 2006).

Besides the limited extent to which transnational actors and their institutions are democratic, there is also the problem of their limited reach and effectiveness. For example, the principal initiative for the accountability of international non-governmental organizations – Accountable Now – provides a framework for just twenty-six member organizations, a tiny fraction of the total population of international non-governmental organizations (Accountable

Now, 2020). Although other frameworks are more universal – such as the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative that are adopted by 93% of the world's top 250 transnational corporations (Global Reporting Initiative, 2020) – these have been criticized for their light-touch approach to corporate regulation (Levy, Szejnwald Brown, and de Jong, 2010).

In view of these limitations, the contributions of transnational democracy and transnational institutions to peaceful change are of questionable significance. With respect to maximalist understandings of peaceful change centred on the pursuit of international justice and the management of global issues, it is undeniable that transnational actors and regimes have had some role to play. However, it may be argued that rather than effectively recovering control over private power, frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative have served to enable private actors to pre-empt potentially more effective mechanisms of governmental regulation. With respect to minimalist understandings of peaceful change in terms of war prevention and the management of the rise of emerging powers, the transnational sphere's contributions may be even more limited. On the one hand, transnational corporations and regimes have played a role in enmeshing rising powers such as China in networks of interdependence that may constrain their ability to pursue their goals through the use of force. However, on the other hand, transnational actors and regimes lack the military capability of states to deter potential challengers to the status quo from the use of violence. Moreover, although the majority of transnational actors – whether profit-making or non-profit-making – are non-violent and non-criminal, a substantial number of transnational actors – such as terrorist groups and organized criminal networks – fail to adhere to the pacific standards of conduct of transnational society.

It should further be noted that transnational society is in large part dependent on states and international society to provide the legal and political contexts in which transnational regimes can function, such as through processes of registration of companies and

associations. In recent years, space for the development of "global civil society" appears to be shrinking rather than expanding, with governments increasing the scope of their mechanisms for oversight of non-state actors. Recently, CIVICUS (2019: 6) reported that "space for civil society – civic space – is now under serious attack in 111 of the world's countries – well over half – and only four per cent of the world's population live in countries where our fundamental civil society freedoms – of association, peaceful assembly and expression – are respected." Even in countries thought to have developed since the 1980s significant civil society space have seen that space restricted with the rise of populist regimes more recently: Hungary under Viktor Orbán and the Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte are commonly cited examples. The need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis has frequently been used as an excuse to impose further restrictions (Roth, 2020).

Future Prospects

Democracy in contemporary world politics faces challenges at every level of the global system. At the national level, the number of representative democracies appears to be shrinking, and even many purportedly "established" democracies are beset with increasingly populist and authoritarian governing political parties. A frequently-cited trigger for the latter development has been the incapacity of national governments effectively to address the problems populations face caused by globalization (Cox, 2017). As this chapter has outlined, institutions of global governance and transnational society – despite their pretensions to democratic accountability – have largely failed to fill the democratic deficit at the global level, with the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions still dominated by veto-holding

and wealthy countries respectively, and transnational actors commonly more accountable to donors or shareholders rather than to other stakeholders.

Although this chapter has highlighted a diverse range of mechanisms for the advancement of peaceful change facilitated through institutions of global governance and transnational society, a striking feature is the limited connection between these institutions and democratic practices. The principal intergovernmental mechanisms for peaceful change in the narrow sense of war avoidance such as those embedded in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter offer a privileged position to the permanent members of the Security Council. As for mechanisms of global governance and transnational society for advancing peaceful change in the maximalist sense of promoting global justice and management of global issues, the problem of greater voice for and accountability to the wealthiest actors in world politics is a recurring deficiency among these institutions.

With respect to the population of the world as a whole, global politics has never been democratic. In earlier periods when states could more comfortably claim to be the dominant actors, democratic practices within a handful of pre-eminent states were accompanied by the pursuit of empire by these states beyond the boundaries of international society. In the present day, pre-eminent democratic states retain an undemocratic privileged position in world order through their dominant positions in the principal institutions of global governance. Many developing countries meeting standards of negative liberty that enable them to be considered “free” still lack the ability effectively to provide for the positive liberty of their citizens given their asymmetrical position in the global economy and in the global political order (Bond, 2018).

Traditionally it has been assumed that democracy and peaceful change are mutually supportive goals. However, given the democratic deficiencies of the principal institutions of global governance through which peaceful change has been facilitated, it may be argued that

democracy is not a necessary condition for peaceful change. More radically, the pursuit of peaceful change may be considered to be an obstacle to democracy at the global level, by denying to the marginalized the legitimacy to pursue their liberation through whatever means may be necessary (Fanon, 1965). From a critical perspective, to focus on the goal of peaceful change may serve to divert attention away from the structural violence of the established institutions by which peaceful change may legitimately be pursued.

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