

Global Governance

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Intro

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE was less understood as an established fact in the sense of a radical globalization thesis, but rather as a topic for critical discussion as one level for possible multi-level governance.

This discussion was also structured by the three keywords CHALLENGES touching upon an analytically grounded evaluation, COPING STRATEGIES stressing the evaluating subject's normative reasoning and IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS which at any rate in the question of governance is focussing upon the political dimension (in the literature, these three dimensions of sustainability science have earlier been discussed e.g. by Becker and Jahn 1999).

The discussion permitted only a tentative identification of relevant issues. What follows, is a subjective synthesis of what the topics might mean, seen from a theoretical platform that has to be further elaborated.

1. CHALLENGES

The discussion took off from the starting assumption that the present state of the world-economy is one of global interrelatedness. The question was raised in connection with the economic level, as to what kind of process(es) was (were) characterizing the field of globalizing power relations and their institutional settings. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE was, thus, understood both in the phenomenal sense of the direct political processes, but also as posing a challenge to our understanding of, how economic and political processes are interrelated in world developments.

Regarding ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, it was argued that the long-term downswing of the world-economy dating from the beginning of the 1970's still was discernible e.g. in substantial production overcapacities. Schematic expectations from e.g. long-wave research assuming cycles of 40-60 years of duration obviously are too narrow in time - and less obvious in space: if there are any signs of more than national upswings, they rather seem to be "bundled" in non-Western space (perhaps India, China and Brazil) showing what might be interpreted

as self-reliant growth, whereas the Triad's accumulation centres don't show a similar pattern.

Regarding POLITICAL INTERRELATIONS it was mentioned that there are divergent interpretations of the question of a hegemonic power position within the monopolar world of power politics. Although based upon an internal economy that was becoming dependent not only upon the possibility to manipulate global financial flows (as it was since many years), but also more directly of sustaining very large trade and balance of payments deficits in relation to non-Western spaces e.g. in East Asia, the dominant circles in the U.S. still may expect an attitude of not "reining in" a still hegemonic power. Alternatively, the world is conceived of as being in a state of dis-hegemony - perhaps a lasting phenomenon, until new constellations of economic and political power eventually might emerge and consolidate. Although this would happen in a real chaos of transition, one has to be aware of this possibility because it opens not only for individuals, but also collectively more space of maneuver in the direction of a multipolar world with new and shifting alliances. Clearly, the EU with its emphasis upon multilateral diplomacy has its chance in this scenario.

As a COROLLARY, we have to transgress any idea of simple or expanded reproduction of the political-economic state of the world as merely following a cyclical pattern of world-economical conjunctures or "ensuing"/"parallel" hegemonic cycles (perhaps including a "new American century"). Implications for a developmental account of, what we call globalizing power relations and their institutional setting, can, then, only be delimited by taking IRREVERSIBLE TRENDS into account that might reach their (perhaps, as Immanuel Wallerstein suggests, asymptotical) limits.

As a case in point, the incorporation into the world-economic division of labour of new sources of labour power and/or new sources of fossil energy were mentioned. The seemingly endless trend of commodification could be added. The near approaching of those, ultimately global limits can be seen as one of the causes for serious structural problems and challenges at all levels of governance, and this might evolve to become the terminal crisis of the historical system itself (as Immanuel Wallerstein expects).

The recurrent EXPANSIONS of the historical capitalist world-system with its origins in Western Europe 500 years ago have within three instances of world-hegemony created a special sort of "meta-geography" (Peter J. Taylor) or "spatial fixes" (D. Harvey, B. Jessop). The latest expansion lacking a clear hegemon is reverting to the initial pattern of a "space of flows" (Taylor) which is only partially mapped. However, the "emergent new markets" being designed by transnational authors, that lay the programmes of expansion, and implemented by institutional actors can be seen as vectors trying to establish new spatial fixes in order to assure the continuity of accumulation imperatives. As symptoms of globalization, they can be read as "the ultimate tension between space and place" (Taylor and Flint 2000) by trying to generalize an inherently ungeneralizable pattern of Western mass consumption (the cultural innovation of the historical American hegemony) and - ecologically untenable - mass production. This dominant project can only forcefully be propagated, because it entails the generalization of an apartheid system of rising inequality up to the level of "global apartheid" (Amoroso 2003).

ADDENDUM

A fundamental challenge for the very concept of global governance lies, however, still at the level of national policies. In order to focus on this, Amoroso and Gallina 2002 argue to reject the acceptance of any unilinear thought of globalization and propose to differentiate it into movements of internationalization instead (19). Their argument is centrally important for our discussion of sustainable multi-level governance: "The national state is still at the crossroads between the perception of and needs of communities and the external demands posed by processes of internationalization. The sustainability of these two levels of social organization can still only be mediated and governed by national states. To escape into localism or to jump into globalization will result in the death of the community" (ibid.). Neither economic nor social cohesion could, thus, be maintained, if the defeat of the national state was accepted as an established fact and as point of departure.

2. COPING STRATEGIES

The analytically grounded question of challenges from global governance was, then, turned into a more normative discussion about coping strategies. With reference to the TERRA 2000 project, mentio-

ned by Jari, a contingency table was drawn up that combined two dimensions of respecting or not respecting: (a) ecological limits; and (b) civil and political rights. Disrespect of ecological limits as in radical trade liberalization of the Washington consensus type was seen as moving from initially (after World War II) being combined with respect for civil and political rights to their systematical disrespect e.g. in connection with an extended war on terror (instead of a wiser security policy), but also in economically enforced structural adjustment programmes eroding local democracy and economies. Under the pressure of (relative) resource scarcity, this might lead to an outright resource dictatorship as an extremely alienated and one-sided way of acknowledging ecological limits. Only if this is done more consistently based upon a democratized sustainability science and with due respect for civil and political rights e.g. in the form of democratically founded sustainability governance strategies this would mean the emergence of an adequate coping strategy.

In contrast to the challenging trends, see above, of "limitless" proliferation of unsustainable patterns of mass consumption and mass production into the last corners of the world being fuelled by purely monetary approaches to re-regulating economies at a global level, sustainable strategies have, then, to contribute to a twofold transition: (a) to sustainable labour organization around the world, perhaps underpinned by nationally instituting minimum levels of basic income for communities in due regard of their own strategies of subsistence; and (b) to sustainable technical and organizational modes of locally transforming energy and materials in exchange with natural environments.

Insight into the necessity of such a complex societal development lead in our discussion to a realization that there must be principally two steps in every coping strategy. More limited steps towards REGIONAL INTEGRATION based upon centralized cooperation of nation states within concentric circles of enlargement have to be supplemented and deepened by real cooperation of multicentric "circles of solidarity" (Bruno Amoroso) with bases in regions of long standing such as - in the European case - the Baltic Sea, the Danube, the Mediterranean incl. North Africa and the Middle East etc.

Instead of any "developmentalist" approach thinking in terms of uni-linear development within nation-states to catch up with "forerunners" it was mentioned in the discussion that one has to think of multilinear processes of leap-frogging. These are more apt in a chaotic environment of a world-system in transition,

where the real question is, how to design strategies for a sustainable world-system development (RCD 2003). From the very beginning of the Brundtland-Rio-process we know in abstracto that sustainable development operationally must be conceived of as a process of change in order to establish harmony between processes of investment, usage of natural resources, technological as well as institutional change (cp. the concluding remark in WCED 1987, chapter 2, subsection on the concept). After more than 15 years of a neoliberal "race to the bottom" we now also know, that a more principal change has to go from structural conservatism stressing the competitiveness of nations as well as their military capacity within rival geopolitics to more common, multilateral policies of transition stressing SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION in every move.

3. IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

Two main areas of implementation problems were touched upon in the discussion, where the first one was said to be the very results of tendencies towards "globalization"; and the other one was termed "differential speed of changes".

Contrary to the Brundtland/Rio/Kyoto/Johannesburg process of international regime cooperation on issues of sustainable development, the "Washington consensus" of US-led INSTITUTIONS OF GLOBAL REGULATION used the combined weight of the core states to push deregulation and budget control upon national states taken in isolation one at a time ("agreements" with IMF and World Bank). Maintaining the institutional shell of a post-war globalizing New Deal since Bretton Woods, policies that originally aimed at stabilizing world-markets by squeezing short-term capital out from currency transfers (because of the repeated disastrous effects of redirecting such short-term capital flows) were supplanted by counter-strategies building upon privatized transactions and the ruthless priority of debt servicing. As a result of structurally adjusting over 100 countries of the periphery or semi-periphery of our system of accumulation, oversupply of world markets as well as continuing debt accumulation systemically have eroded most national and/or regional (re-)development strategies (Holland 1994).

Therefore, the "global governance" task at hand is not only to neutralize some "negative impacts of globalization". The aggregated result of steps towards globalization in their entirety has to be addressed by

departing from their perverted logic: "The impacts of globalization are coherent, without mistakes, with an apartheid strategy. These impacts cannot be reduced while the system is enforced. They can be reduced only by weakening and defeating the trend towards globalization" itself (Amoroso and Gallina 2002, 18).

Thus, a strategic turn is required to overcome the paralyzing effect and the real damages from steps towards globalization - understood as the application of the combined power of the core states and economies against any nation (actually, the United Kingdom was the first core country to be underlain structural adjustment paving the way for Margaret Thatcher, cp. Panich 2000). Progressive solutions will have to reinsert a nation's economy into its historical as well as natural regional context on equal footing with others. This can only be done under the premise of an international trade regime that grants ASYMMETRICAL PROTECTION to underdeveloped regions (as proposed by Myrdal 1957) - and not to the most powerful blocks, as it is fact of the day. By this way, the national mediation of pressures between communities and the outside world could work to reduce some of the implementation problems for coping strategies as those envisaged above and help to unfold the dynamics of them. At the level of economic restructuring itself, regional blocs of mixed economies are decisive in order to counteract unconditional privatization as one of the main drivers of globalization. Also agreements made by the EU such as the Euro-Mediterranean Agreements have to be revised from their actual monetaristic bias, see the critique of Holland 2002.

A politically paralyzing social consequence of steps towards imperial globalization was, however, mentioned in the discussion as the massive emergence of MARGINALIZED GROUPS AND AREAS all around the world. This can be understood as the end result of what Amoroso and Gallina call "the end of development" (see also Amoroso 1997). Instead of positive sum games, the institution of debt repayment regimes and structural adjustment in the former Third World has resulted in severe boomerangs hitting also the productive economic life of core states (Goerge 1992). Therefore, it is time to reconceptualize our understanding of marginalization processes as inherent in the present restructuring of the world-system itself: "The 'ideal type' of modernity pursued during more than 500 years by the 'Western world' has met a serious obstacle: it is not reproducible on world-scale. The expansion of capitalism places demands on production and invents needs neither of

which can be satisfied. Its model of production simply cannot sustainably satisfy seven billion people. It remains a possibility only within the framework of an 'apartheid' system. Therefore, it develops a dual attitude with a 'global' rhetoric in economics, politics and rights on the one side, and an increasing militarisation and aggression on a world-scale on the other" (Amoroso and Gallina 2002, 17f). Obviously, it is this process of transforming the whole world according to the imperatives of a "global apartheid" process of accumulation", which is the strategic problem for implementing a more equal, resource-conserving and worker-protective democratic strategy of sustainable development.

As to the topic of DIFFERENTIAL SPEED OF CHANGES, the discussion did not really take up, what already earlier has been a topic, e.g. in the Berlin workshop on October 8, 2003, when Meike Spitzner talked about regional problems of daily life and transport planning with its gender aspects. The systemic nexus between turn-over time of capital and rates of profit might be one explanatory factor still operative in the diverse mechanisms of acceleration inherent in deregulation and reregulation strategies, when they are favouring the side of capital. Increasing elements of resistance will also here be needed in order to counteract sudden, catastrophic changes in real conditions - and this begins with posing the right questions in the right place at the right time, such as: Globalisation? No, another world is possible.

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