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## Sustainable Governance

### Reclaiming the political sphere

Reflections on Sustainability,  
Globalisation and Democracy

### Which Globalisation is Sustainable?

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## Abstract

This paper deals with what we consider to be key negative elements of current globalisation processes, and examines critically the dominance of the concept of global governance as a mode of control. This draws attention firstly to the fact that globalisation has an intentionally political orientation. Secondly, we are interested in approaches which can counteract the deficits with respect to democracy and the environment which are associated with globalisation. This is not a directly action-oriented approach, but a conceptual analysis.

Drawing on the work of the Study Commission of the German Bundestag “Globalisation of the World Economy” (2002), we outline the concept of global governance and point out democratic weaknesses. Following this, we present approaches which, with their specific localisation of civil society and a different concept of the political, seem suited to do justice to the political dimensions and the problems of globalisation processes.

# 1 Introduction

In the report of the Study Commission of the German Bundestag “Globalisation of the Global Economy – Challenges and Responses”<sup>1</sup> the final section of the majority report is entitled “Shaping globalisation through global governance”. This highlights the explicitly political intent of the concept of global governance. The sustainability debate, conventionally focused on environmental, economic and social, rather than political dimensions, provides little support for the current discussion of global governance.

The globalisation process increasingly withdraws political substance from liberal representative democracies, and by no means only because of a loss of national sovereignty. With the shrinking of space and time as a result of progress particularly in the fields of information and communications technology, the hypermobility of capital across increasingly liberalised and integrated financial markets following in the wake of the implosion of the socialist state systems has led to a global expansion of the capitalist mode of production and the integration of more and more regions of the world in the capitalist market system. This in turn has transformed the lives of people, and has brought with it an increasing social polarisation between North, South and East, as well as within the OECD states themselves. Liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation remain the central engines of this process. The standard neo-liberal recipe “*with the private sector as the engine of growth*” contains a highly political statement. The globalisation process not only breaks down the boundaries of national states, but also leads to the erosion of their decision-making agency. New actors and new levels make their appearance in the political arena, usually with little transparency and democratic determination of the common good.

But what happens when key public services for public are surrendered to the private sector of the economy and as a result citizens turn into customers? How does this effect the democratic shaping of the common good? What will happen to the right of public deliberation on public goods forming essential part of the common good, and to participation, transparency, accountability, and legitimisation, when increasing areas are moved from the realm of citizenship to that of the customer? And, while privatisation reduces pressure on the public sector and leads to the transfer of key services into private households, to what extent – invisible to the public eye – will there be a reversion to highly asymmetrical gender roles?

The political space is being re-allotted. If democracy is not to lose out in the process, the political space will have to be conceptionally reviewed within the terms of a substantiated concept of democracy, including gender democracy, and the corresponding approaches should be identified. As our initial hypothesis we would propose that, in order to direct

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1 We use Study Commission when referring to the official English translation of the Summary Report and Enquete when a quotation is taken from the German version.

globalisation to sustainable pathways, democracy must be reviewed and newly conceptualised.

A large part of the literature on the current demands of governance is based on the implicit or explicit assumption that everything was more or less fine with democracy until the start of what is generally referred to as the “Erosion of the nation state”. It was only when globalisation led to the “post-national constellation” (Habermas 1998) and increasing global economic integration that the marginalisation of the political sphere led to the disconcerting deficit in democracy which the debate about global governance is searching to redress.

We are not arguing that there are two separate spheres – politics and economy – of which one gains dominance at the expense of the other. Rather, we see globalisation – or more precisely ‘*corporate-driven globalisation*’, as taking place *within* the political sphere, changing it in the process. The neo-liberal project of *corporate-driven globalisation* insists on so-called free, deregulated markets as the primary locations for profitable business, and demands at the same time an increase in the density of regulations regarding state guarantees of ownership rights and conditions of competition. New configurations are generated between the Public and Private which lead to the erosion of democracy, in particular where the privatisation processes transform public rights into private demand based on the ability to pay. We are unable to accept Ulrich Beck’s all-too-modest proposal for a “consumer-oriented democracy” (Beck 1998, p. 35); it would seem that the “DM, Yen, Swiss Franc or Dollar ‘ballots’” (Altvater/Mahnkopf 1996, p. 14) are rather unfairly distributed for this.

Globalisation, then, is a political project. In the course of globalisation, the principles of territoriality, sovereignty and legality of the received international system of states have become fragile. However, “at the same time, globalisation is not a process that just happened. The intensification of global economic integration was politically desired.” (Study Commission 2002, p. 10) The neo-liberal perspective of the economy, society and state is based on the assumption that only the market is in a position to secure an efficient allocation of resources in the service of all, and that this is a truth of global validity. It is concerned with “establishing the market as the dominant mode of social regulation” (Zürn 1998, p. 292). By the same token the dominant school of economics accepts the steady increase of the scope for ‘private’ global actors and the reduction in state welfare services accompanied by a dramatic increase in the inequality of ownership and wealth, and that at the same time the opportunities to shape communal life in a democratic fashion are continually being reduced.

Ulrich Beck speaks in this context of “Politicising by de-politicising the state ... The balance of power, the contract of the first modern age based on nation states, erodes and is transferred – past the government and parliament, the public realm and the courts – into the sole responsibility of economic action” (Beck 1998, p. 24 f.). Yet, powerful economic interests, firmly anchored in the political system, are well-able to evade these ‘laws’, whether by legal or extra-legal means, if it seems to them that the laws of the market do

not serve their interests sufficiently. At the same time, decisions made with deference to supposed economic constraints, and frequently relocated in the multifarious, often less public forums, help to support “the image of a post-political world.” (ibid., p. 20)

In order to establish a global market order in accordance with neo-liberal philosophy, to enforce its implementation and to limit its destabilising effects, a considerable degree of regulatory intervention is required. Deregulation is therefore not an automatic process of erosion of state agency, but the consequence of political decisions which are transmitted within a specific pattern of legitimisation. In fact, it would be more accurate to talk of a politically intended shift in regulation. In areas such as internal security, for example, the level of regulation has tended to increase. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) with its many demands on nation states to act or to desist from action only provides a framework within which the nation states undertake to comply with neo-liberal rules.

## **Re-configuration of Public and Private**

A central feature of neo-liberal globalisation is that it leads to a re-structuring of the political space. But the pursuance of the common good is greatly encumbered by what can be termed the “new privatness” and the associated dual tendency to privatisation. A “lean” state apparatus is created by transferring wide areas, in particular of the social infrastructure to private economic agents. Of necessity this process not only relinquishes space for state action, but also the state’s capacity for effective regulation is strongly put at risk, if not equally surrendered. Frequently, transnational corporations and non-state organisations take on tasks which were previously in state hands. Without an appropriate institutional infrastructure, this all too often results in the efficiency and quality of services being called into question, contrary to the claims advanced in justification of such changes. In addition, there are often dramatic consequences for the access opportunities of the poor strata of the population. In the developed industrial countries this affects above all the welfare sector with the elements of care and social security as well as the delivery of essential services, in particular at local levels. At the same time citizenship rights and entitlements addressed to the political directorate in the public arena become transformed into private demand and a matter for market negotiations. As a consequence of neo-liberal priorities national competitiveness and location advantages are granted unreserved privilege. Extensive areas of the social security system and the provision of basic services become the responsibility of individualised private agents. This affects private households by impinging on available income and burdening them with an additional work load. The experience with structural adjustment programmes in the Global South and in the transformation countries demonstrates graphically that reducing the burden on the state budget leads to an increase of the burdens above all of women. Called back into their role as care givers in the private sphere they do all they can individually to meet care needs, which once again become invisible rather than being seen as what they in fact are, namely a contribution to the reproduction of the overall economy.

The reconfiguration of the relation between public and private is linked to a restructuring of gender relations, and there are clear efforts to organise these again in accordance with the traditional order. But it is by no means always possible to turn the horizon of experience and the self-realisation of women back to the domestic sphere satisfactorily and without contradiction. Very often, women experience the re-privatisation as more or less forced upon them; it also creates pressure on the family income. And if in addition the gender role of men as bread-winner and head of the family also comes under considerable pressure (*gender anxiety*), then the burdens more and more often lead to violent forms of acting out gender relations (Nayaran 2000).

In addition to these restructuring shifts, there are also processes of informalisation. We observe these world-wide both in the organisation of labour in the production and the services sectors as well as on levels of political decision-making. In both cases we are confronted with a gradual process of erosion of rights and desintegration of democracy (Sassen 2000, Altvater/Mahnkopf 2002).

### **Erosion of the common good and of democracy**

On the global level, “the transition of the primarily politically defined competition of systems to the predominantly economically defined competition of locations” (Study Commission 2002, p. 9) systematically undermines the unity of social and political spaces and contributes to the re-structuring of the relationship between state organs, the political class and the population. “The space of the political disappears and consequently the locus of democracy.” (Altvater 1997, p. 250) The new orientation of the state towards market competition also results in fiscal redistribution from bottom to top. In addition, it leads to a grave neglect of democratic, developmental, and environmental values, and not the least also endangers public goods. “What is left for the politically powerful in nation-states to do, is to perform well in their global homework.” (Narr 2001, p. 55) This “homework” necessarily ties them even closer into the logic of the actors who are determining the direction.

With the “displacement of the political by the market” (Habermas 1998, p. 120) the public hand loses access to the resources which are needed to shape the common good and to establish the social conditions necessary for broad political participation. The new global rules systematically liberate the political class from their obligation to serve the needs of the citizens, to the advantage of the so-called global players. Simultaneously, there is a clear shift of key decision-making to little transparent, power-structured bodies which are not linked to the democratic process. The results of decision-making processes within the framework of the nation-state aimed at preserving specific structures and goods, or at protecting norms, standards, principles, values, and participation rights, are increasingly attacked as ‘market distortions’, ‘location disadvantages,’ or ‘inefficiencies’.



## 2 Global governance and democracy

If globalisation is to be directed into sustainable channels, then in accordance with our initial hypothesis, democracy must be rethought and reshaped. Liberal parliamentary democracy, the rights of the citizens to be able to (co-) decide on their own affairs in the private as well as the public sphere, has previously been bound to the nation-state. Rule of law and legality in public affairs are on the whole linked to statehood. If people are encouraged as “important actors in sustainable development” (Schröder 2002) to enter into “broader societal communication” (ibid, p. 54) and active participation, then the question is what should be their relationship to each other, to the common good, and the community, and which approaches should they adopt under the conditions of globalisation. How are the community, gender relations, natural foundations of life, technical progress, social connectivity and societal responsibility to be dealt with in a global context with porous borders? The agenda therefore includes a systematic, critical review of the role of political systems and institutions in the globalisation process, and their democratic permeability; and also a process of (self)-reassurance regarding the participatory interests and options open to the citizens, and the normative orientations which direct the whole process and which are to become effective in it.

The globalisation process, sustainable development, the spaces for shaping democracy and gender justice are still rarely considered in conjunction with each other. They are usually treated in separate discourses. If an analysis of globalisation touches on gender relations it usually remains restricted to consideration of the effects of the systemic discrimination of women and of the burdens they have to bear.

Against this background, we first outline the political dimension of sustainability in a global context and then consider the opportunities offered for democratic openings including the dimension of gender democracy<sup>2</sup>. We also attempt to outline a concept of political action which does not deal in hindsight with gender inequality after this has been generated (or tolerated), but which aspires to integrate gender justice right from the start.

### 2.1 Critical consideration of a political model

The concept of global governance is becoming more and more widely accepted, and acts as a reference point for a range of modes of political action in a global context, with varying contours and connotations. Only partially linked to this is the recently revived debate on the crisis of representative democracy, in the context of which enhanced models of

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2 No satisfactory consensus has yet been reached about the concept of gender democracy in either public or academic debate. It remains as a sign of incomplete democracy in terms of gender politics, and a call to action. It is used in this sense here.

civil society participation are investigated. Lively debates about participation are being conducted at the general political level, and in various fields of politics. Also addressing all political fields, gender mainstreaming is to be understood as the attempt to reduce the asymmetry in political and social spheres in the sense of gender democracy and gender equality.

In 1994 the *Commission on Global Governance* submitted a report containing a design of politics in the global sphere which in Germany is drawn on by the Foundation for Development and Peace (SEF) and the associated Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg – here in particular Franz Nuscheler and Dirk Messner (Messner/Nuscheler 2003). They also draw implicitly on the reformulation of political action by James N. Rosenau and David Held, which is based on a spatial continuum between nationhood and internationality (Rosenau 1992, Held 1995). As member of the Commission (Nuscheler) and contributor to its work (Messner) this line of discussion fed directly into their concept of global governance.

The need for global governance is based here on the growth of trans-boundary problems and the need, in accordance with a social market economy, to protect, maintain and secure public goods at the global level, as well as to work against the undesirable effects of globalisation and unrestrained externalisation. In general, it is assumed that the growing “pressure of problems caused by the rising transaction costs for non-cooperative actions will lead to the gradualist construction and expansion of global governance.” (Nuscheler 2000, p. 155) The multilateralism resulting from the pressure of problems necessarily has an anti-hegemonial tendency, which is certainly intended.

As generally used in Germany, the concept of global governance has three characteristics.

1. It is concerned with regaining state agency, with re-conquering the state’s mandate and power to shape politics, rather than the withdrawal of this power.
2. Global governance represents a new political model, in which various governmental and non-governmental, corporate and civil society actors cooperate systematically towards joint solutions for problems within a variety of network settings.
3. Globalisation must be guided and supported by a basic minimal ethical consensus as embodied in human rights agreements and the UN Charter, with their claim to universality.

However, *the Global Governance architecture has a democracy problem*, as its proponents concede (Messner/Nuscheler 2000, p. 180 f.). There is a broad consensus in the debate that one reason for this is that parliamentary democracy is historically (and possibly also systematically) linked to the nation-state, and with the erosion of the latter it too loses ground. The systematic preference given to private undertakings (*codes of conduct, global compacts*) over state regulation, once again undermines the core of state responsibility which could still be susceptible to the influence of the citizenry. Subjectively, people are unlikely to feel their interests are represented in international negotiations. National

parliaments have little influence anyway on such rounds of negotiations. And along with democratic rights and procedures, human rights can also easily be endangered.

## 2.2 Responses ...

In the debate on global governance, reference is frequently made to the role of civil society. The complexity of the challenges to be resolved, interdependencies between problems and areas of impact, and not least the intensified demands for participation and the increased level of citizens' organisations have led, it is argued, to the growth of civil society as an agent in its own right which has managed to acquire a voice outside the established procedures of the political system. Whether "civil society" actors are taken to include private business, as in the system of the United Nations, or (as is more generally the case) solely to include non-profit organisations and social movements – their engagement is generally viewed as a considerable gain for democracy, or by some even as a response to the unresolved "democratic question" within the global governance strategy.

We have our doubts. Setting state and civil society up in opposition to one another presupposes a separation of the locus of political power which is not immediately plausible. The process of restructuring public and private spheres and the acceptance of this by society (albeit reluctantly) hardly seems to be clear evidence of such a dichotomy. Furthermore, the contrasting assumes that there are no effective axes of dominance working within civil society and within the so-called private sphere. Finally, it also assumes that the topics addressed by the political process, such as in our case the conceptualisation and management of nature and the environment, are not themselves also products of social construction.

In the following we will initially pick up two threads of the socio-political argumentation regarding democratic theory for reconsideration and reconstruction.

- Representatives of what is generally labelled as "globalisation critique" have carefully studied the concept of global governance, especially as conceptualised in the German debate, and with a view to developing a theory of democracy have emphasised the underlying concept of the political. Social scientists oriented towards a new reading of Antonio Gramsci call into question the liberal construction of a dichotomy between the market sphere and the political sphere. For them, economics is politics, and the organisation of the markets and the relations of production is itself the result of political processes and decisions. The link between both spheres, they conclude, can hardly be seen as allowing correction or limitation imposed from the "world of politics" on the "world of economics".
- Feminist theoreticians have taken up the concept of global governance because of its openness in the direction of civil society and have worked intensively on the possible inclusion of gender political considerations of political action in newly projected

democratic forms. At the same time, their political agenda includes as a key the reclamation of the private as political.

Both theoretical approaches centre on the re-determination and re-conceptualisation of the political sphere, which forms the core of the global governance debate. They see their responses as invitations to engage in further theoretical debate and it is precisely in this function that we will proceed to explore them.

### 2.2.1 ... *from a neo-Gramscian perspective*

Essentially, two objections are raised from the neo-Gramscian perspective against the concept of global governance, but these weigh heavily. After considering these criticisms we will present elements of the neo-Gramscian theory on which this critique is based.

The concept of global governance is based on a view of politics which excludes power and interest structures between actors and groups. Furthermore it puts an undefined world ethics in the place of democratic legitimisation, transparency and accountability. The criticism can be explained on the basis of the cornerstones of the global governance strategy, on the role played by problem pressure, civil society, forms of regulation, and ethics.

Most concepts of global governance assume some objective *problem pressure*, which impacts across boundaries. It creates new interdependencies between states and at the same time increasingly undermines the problem-solving capacity of individual states. 'Finding' the 'right' solution appears more a matter of information and implementation commensurate with given complexities, with the state at the most involved in moderating between interests. Key questions are not raised: who has a problem, when and why, who is able to gain attention in the public arena for their problems and definitions of the situation and get these included in the problem processing catalogue, who and by which mechanism is involved in the elaboration of problem solving strategies, and who and in which form partakes in implementation processes? It is also implied that unresolved problems, e.g. environmental concerns or matters of social and gender injustice are essentially due to a loss of the capacity for state control, and not, attributable to social structures or the related dominant economic and political strategies. In other words, political rule is not seen as a factor.

However, the Final Report of the Study Commission is much more differentiated than the critiqued highly technocratic definition of global challenges. "Clear hierarchical relations and one-sided dependency" (Enquete 2002, p. 416) the report states, indicate that the concept of interdependency may not be all that suitable. Global problems "may be due to a number of widely differing causes, fundamentally different interests and options may have to be distinguished. There may be common as well as diverging interests" (ibid). And the Final Report also at least takes note that problems can be viewed from the perspective of those wielding power but also of the powerless, and that "solutions" may well turn out the very opposite.

Despite this, though, the effects of the globalisation processes are then summarily classed as changes to the form of the nation state. This goes hand in hand with a change in form of politics. The *state* acts as hub and moderator, as *interface and interdependency manager*. Governance becomes a matter of regulating. The corporate and the social world, grouped together as private actors with little differentiation in terms of “logic of action and problem-solving” are equally at its disposition. New forms, not new contents are the key, necessary changes in political direction are eclipsed, and it is to be feared that the networks and extra-institutional negotiations of the actors leave little room for democratic control (cf. Scherrer 2000, Huffs Schmid/Brunnengräber 2001). In fact, though, the reorganisation of the state apparatus, which presents itself as a management process adequate for the complexities involved, actually serves the functional requirements of neoliberal globalisation (Francisco et al. 2000).

The undifferentiated melange of non-governmental actors, corporate and social world summarily are classed as representing *civil society* with properties such as “autonomous, emancipatory, integrative, consensus-oriented” (Schade 2002, p. 3), and declared the agents of democratic voice and control in the global sphere. Against all evidence of power-related political entanglement the contrasting of government and non-government is still extensively maintained. What is termed ‘global civil society’ consists, in fact, of neo-corporative, transnationally institutionalised structures without democratic legitimisation, or sufficient transparency (Huffs Schmid/Brunnengräber 2001). Not only is there no discussion of the very different historical, political and social phases and contexts in which the opposition of “state world” and “social world” emanated and acquired new social and political meaning, but the corresponding theories are not placed in context. No reference is made to the major debates on democracy and co-determination in the private business sector.

Instead of acknowledging the problems in the context of an analysis of power relations and taking into consideration social contradictions, conflicts, and diverging interests, as well as the causes of unequal global opportunities, there is the call for a global ethos of responsibility or *world ethics*. Though it is not the intention of the proponents of global governance to skim over the systemic lack of mechanisms of social equalisation and democratic procedure, “the demands for a normative ‘world ethos’” (Paech 2001, 22, Brand et al. 2000) and resultant responsibilities do run the risk of facing profound inequalities and conflicts of interests merely with pleas to voluntary insight. At best such mechanisms are recognised as tools for efficiency and stability-oriented management.

As indicated, the protagonists of global governance themselves concede that there are unresolved problems of democracy and legitimisation. But since they see threats to democracy as resulting mainly from the dissolution of national borders, they find themselves in the dilemma of taking as *ex post*-reference a supposedly satisfactorily functioning democracy in the past, and as a consequence seeking solutions primarily through transnational cooperation aimed at reconstructing state functions. They hope that by thus regaining scope for political agency they will be able to counteract deficits in democratic participation and legitimisation through increased effectiveness. They have no strategies as such for democratisation.

These are the major points of departure for the school of thought following Antonio Gramsci. The power analysis of neo-Gramscian theory points beyond the fixation on changes to the institutional form of the political in that it also takes into consideration the constitution of the broader social context within which globalisation processes move and exert pressure for change on the organisation of the political system. The resultant systematic critique of political power owes much to an understanding of scientific action which examines the on-going transformation process and the associated restructuring of the political space both for the driving forces and for signs of rupture. This takes place in the hope of being able to glean the substance for emancipation. But the authors linked more or less closely to Gramsci would be the first to acknowledge that the ‘neo-Gramscian approach’ is a construction site under an inspiring name rather than a finished structure.

Regarding the political-economic aspects of their framework, approaches situated in Gramsci’s tradition rely heavily on premises framed by regulation theory. When establishing the basic concepts of political agency and democracy, a systematic link is forged which avoids polarisations, dichotomies, and divisions, and which offers an opportunity for the critique of power. The thematic focuses and approaches vary considerably, coming from democratic theory (e.g. Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe), from economics (e.g. Michel Aglietta, Alain Lipietz), state theory (e.g. Joachim Hirsch), or from the debate on social movements (e.g. Roland Roth, Alex Demirovic). A common theme to the social scientists inspired by a re-reading of Gramsci is a critical examination of Marx’s concept of the political. But while they reject Gramsci’s frequently determinist and economic narrowing which may already be found with Marx (cf. Görg 1994, Bruch/Krebs 1996), they adhere all the more firmly to the critique of power. In contrast to the concept of regulating with its technical approach to problem-solving, the concept of regulation integrates social and political power. On the basis of a concept of structure from historical materialism, the question shared by them is: By what means and to what extent will it be possible to stabilise institutionally the basically crisis-ridden dynamics of capitalist socialisation? And in the context of our discussion: What part is played by the global governance discourse? (Brand 2003) Most of the authors engaging in this discourse insist on a rationality and dynamics of social actors *sui generis*, which does not permit the reduction of strategies and actions to functions arising in or deriving from a social context. This means that considerable importance is attached to cultural dimensions, lifestyles, consumptive norms, customs and habits, common sense, and performative and representational acts.

Globalisation is understood here as the articulation of an historical struggle for a new, post-Fordist capitalist accumulation regime. It brings businesses, state and civil society into a new relationship with one another, involving cooperative strategies which are also typical of networks. This process is not really one of ‘less state’, but rather a change to the form and function of state action, which in the final analysis is oriented towards maintaining profitable capitalist conditions of reproduction. Through the ‘free operation of market forces’, unconditional priority of international competitiveness and economic efficiency dictate the major guidelines for political and social action. Saskia Sassen speaks in this context of “denationalised state agendas and privatised norm-making” (Sassen 2000,



p. 395), and draws thereby attention to the on-going fundamental transformation process of the presence:

“[that] comes from the world of private power yet installs itself in the public realm and in so doing contributes to de-nationalise what has been historically constructed as national state agendas. [...] This brings with it strengthened possibilities of norm-making in the interests of the few rather than the majority.” (ibid., p. 393 and 397)

Although the formation of social relationships and institutions is to some extent independent of a mechanical profit logic, it nevertheless remains directed overall to the demands of capitalist accumulation. “Economy itself is understood as a socially constructed and institutionally embedded relationship and not as an independent social sphere (market) subject to political regulation” (Brand et al. 2000, p. 50).

To this extent, the idea of a rudderless market, whose actors should be embedded like recalled sorcerer’s apprentices, is regarded as inappropriate. The nation state, its institutional system and its actions by no means disappear in the process of privatisation and economisation of living conditions, but merely undergo a transformation to a “national competition-state” (Hirsch 1995). And politics certainly does not disappear, although it may be so disguised as to be unrecognisable. But it may no longer be subject to democratic influence and control. The selective neo-liberal withdrawal of state action could all too easily suggest that the political in general is vanishing. In actual fact it is primarily welfare state control and service functions which are being curtailed, whereas disciplinary functions and the parts of the state apparatus responsible for adjustment to ‘external’ requirements become more important, nationally and internationally. Therefore the dual privatisation and the limitation of the scope for political state control (and indeed also the central orientation of globalisation policies to secure private property by means of establishing national and international norms) is fundamentally political. The widespread claims that there is no alternative only serve to highlight the close ties between the state and the social forces propelling globalisation and the revised state agenda. Therefore, corporate globalisation must be understood from the beginning as a political process and not as a hopelessly asymmetric face-off between a powerful economy and powerless politics.

Gramsci and those following this tradition also have a fundamentally different definition of civil society. Gramsci distinguishes between “civil society”, i.e. the ensemble of organisms commonly called private, and “political society”, which is directly linked to state power. Civil society does not represent a normative factor and a social instance constituting its own sphere in opposition to the state sphere, which is approached by a state under pressure from globalisation and other problems with the intention of winning additional resources of competence and legitimacy. Rather, civil society is used as an analytical category and is understood as forming part of the general political arena in which various axes of power are located, each extending into the state apparatus, or being regulated and influenced by it, a space, that is, within which power relationships, conflicts and contra-

dictions extending into the state apparatus can be negotiated and resolved. This perspective does not preclude a certain independence of plural worlds of everyday life, characterised by pre-political elements. Civil society therefore definitely does not constitute a sphere opposite to political power, but is a political societal arena in which consensus is generated for the existing order, or, as the case may be, for an alternative order.

In this reading, Gramsci's concept of hegemony, according to which the power-conforming consensus is anchored in the civil society itself, is of central importance. Hegemony designates the power visibly bundled in the political directorate as reaching directly into the civil society. It means a dominance which seeks to secure political, intellectual, cultural, and moral backing, and which can also rely on approval, recognition, and consensus in particular where its substance is political rule. At the same time its strength lies in what Borg calls its "decentral methodological structure" (Borg 2001, p. 69), its renunciation of an Archimedean point of social developments in favour of the fluid interaction between constellations of interests and social power relations, within which certain behavioural requirements and attributions of meaning gain dominance. The concept also requires no stringent rational correspondence. Hegemonial projects may well be oriented to the future, without having yet found their 'window of opportunity', and in the absence of the acceptance indispensably inherent to the concept of hegemony they might never do so.

In summary, the reorganisation of state functions and the transition from government to governance is not the reaction, as it were, to external or objective pressure from problems, but to the changing demands of capitalist reproduction. The reorientation of the logic of the state apparatus towards securing a competitive location and systemic viability in the face of competition, to the detriment of the common good and societal interests, poses a severe threat to the received form of parliamentary democracy. Important elements of globalisation combine with individual institutional areas at the national level and denationalise the political content of state action. Deregulation and privatisation change the structures by means of which people can call their government to account. The economic and political weight of global players and the dynamics of the various levels of politics further limit the democratic space open for public political activities on the part of the citizens. Conversely, it is also necessary again to examine critically which interests are represented in state actions (Sassen 2000).

Nonetheless, since core functions of statehood, in particular the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force (Max Weber) and the creation of social cohesion will remain for the time-being within the framework of the nation state, it still remains necessary to establish and secure the preconditions for a democratic shaping of globalisation primarily at the national level. This holds true even when the corresponding conditions which make a relative social equalisation possible in the first place are increasingly being undermined. Here the critics of the dominant understanding of global governance are in agreement. However, they accuse the conventional view of failing to go beyond a "mere regulation of capitalist society" (Görg/Hirsch 1998, p. 319) and thus necessarily failing to satisfy the demand for a democratic shaping of globalisation.



### 2.2.2 ... and from a feminist perspective

All too often the existence of gender arrangements escapes the analytical and activity-oriented exploration of the major issues of politics and society. This repeated ‘overlooking’ of socially constructed gender identities and of gender-relations as institutionalised structural features of social life is all the more remarkable because at least the existence, if not the effects of gender arrangements ought to be apparent to everybody from their daily life. Regarding these “blind spots” (Sassen 1999) to the gender orders effective in all societies and the inherent systematic discrimination of women, feminist social science research with its critical analyses over the last three decades has broken the silence on gender dominance. It has collected knowledge and evidence from society and politics which indicates the need for a fundamental review of the received concepts of the political.<sup>3</sup>

There is now extensive literature providing evidence of the impact of gender relations on the formation of personal identity and relationships, and recognising gender orders as integral elements of social practices and institutions. Feminist research and theory formation have covered and explored all levels of the political. It continues to scrutinise how the specific construction and reproduction of the meaning of “maleness” and “femaleness” are maintained. It focuses its attention mainly on the question how everyday life realities find their way into political action, what is ascribed to the political sphere, and the extent to which there is systematic correspondence between political structures with social inclusion or exclusion. The re-examination of the political sphere and the fundamental review of its structuration, have long been a part of the feminist discourse (excellent overviews are provided by Becker-Schmidt/Knapp 2000, and Braun et al. 2000).

#### *Globalisation topics*

The scrutiny of the gender-coded division into public and private spheres, which first and foremost forms part of the steps and topics of re-examining the political space, reaches back into the early formulations of feminist theory. Associated with this division is the systematic under-valuation of the private sphere and its subordination under the public sphere. Both are assigned their own ethical concepts. Another topic with a long tradition in particular in the feminist literature in German-speaking countries is the international political economy. This originated from development research and North-South relations, and the work of the “Bielefeld School” on the relationship between subsistence and market-oriented production (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981. v. Werlhof u.a. 1993). Since the first experience with neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes in the countries of the Global South, committed social critique has developed into feminist political economics (Bakker 1994, Elson 1995). The analysis is always directed at the gendered interaction between state and market and public and private households. This is no different for the more recent approaches to the *care economy* (Razavi 1999). They have originated on the

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<sup>3</sup> Feminism covers a wide range of theoretical approaches with the common normative goal of gender equality and the recognition of gender-differentiated living situations.

basis of a variety of analyses on the curtailment of the welfare state which affect women in particular, and the renewed invisibility of women's reproductive work in the family. The debates in the international women's movements and the relevance of universal human rights for women have been studied frequently and comprehensively (Joachim 1999, v. Braunmühl 2001). In addition, the research on social movements has taken up from the practices of the women's and environmental movements the question of the effectiveness of norms, which in turn bring supposedly private topics such as violence, torture or abortion into the public and political sphere (Brabandt et al. 2002). This eventually led to the question of the substantial changes to the struggle for historical achievements such as civil rights in times of de-nationalisation, whichever form it takes (Sassen, Zürn), as well as to issues of an increasingly interacting cultural multiplicity.

Finally and of particular interest in the context of 'sustainable governance', are the decisive impulses from the women's movements for reflection on an understanding of science which all too easily falls victim to technocracy and presumptuousness. Since the mid-1980s there have been extensive discussions in the international women's movements on environmental concerns and technological developments as well as on gender-structured approaches to science. Together with feminist scholars of natural sciences and science theory they analyse strategies to oppose the "Earth Follies" (Seager 1993) with an "Alliance for the future" (Dankelmann/Davidson 1988). By the time of the Rio Conference 1992, an extensive repertoire of knowledge had been built as well as very effective methods of organising. At all subsequent conferences, such as the recent conference in Johannesburg on sustainable development, skilfully elaborated texts with specific recommendations have been presented (e.g. WEDO 2002).

The topics mentioned can be readily identified as belonging to the core issues of the globalisation debate. They all form part of the decades-long efforts in women's politics to redefine the political sphere. Specifically the debates within and between the international women's movements with their shared human rights frame of reference, which has been elaborated transversing many steps and differentiations and has been spelled out in the normative goals of social justice, sustainability and peace, have contributed significantly to the formation of a political globality. Nevertheless, the dominant discourse in German-speaking countries refers at best in short asides to the results of gender research and the debates of the international women's movements. Literally on the other side, feminist social scientists once again study the mainstream attentively and knowledgeable, but with limited expectations for linkage points for transformatory politics (Holland-Cunz/Ruppert 2000). Would it not be desirable to reach beyond such asymmetric communication?

Searching for the reasons for the systematic invisibility of women in the thought constructs of main-stream society and politics, feminist theory soon identified the importance of the prevailing division into a public and a private sphere, with the public sphere having male connotations, and the declaration of the private sphere as the realm of women. These ascriptions are linked with different ethical concepts and emotional forms, and each is coupled to gender images and social divisions of labour. Feminists have analysed

in depth the way in which the liberal concept of the separation of public and private and the construction of a gender-neutral legal subject systematically results in unequal gender differentials in terms of the full development of civil rights. They have broken down the barriers of the domestic sphere as an area beyond the law, primarily in terms of domestic violence. And they have shown how through social conditioning the inner access to the newly conquered areas of equality will always remain precarious.

The central motto of the new women's movement is succinct: "The private is political". The prevalence of male dominant structures is based on the exclusion and denigration of the non-public, the spaces of living and working of women. Feminists have critiqued the dominant political edifice of thought, which excludes the private sphere ascribed to women from the public discourse as non-political, and they demand the recall of the "private" in the political into the public sphere. At the same time they draw attention to the contradiction that the liberal state does in fact treat the family as a public institution, and has very specific ideas about its form and practices which underlie very concrete political and legal regulations. Feminist theory adopts an increasingly differentiated approach to the social mechanisms which reproduce binary gender constructions and the processes which establish these in daily language and imagery, which then in turn provide the material for a gender order which fixes the inequality (Dackweiler 1995). This leads to a gendered division of democracy (Holland-Cunz 1998), the unacceptability of which is emphasised by the term 'gender democracy'. In other words, the new women's movement is primarily concerned with the re-determination of what should be regarded as politically relevant.

At the core of the neo-liberal project of globalisation lies the shifting of the boundaries between the public and private, a shift of a very different kind from that raised in feminist discourse, but closely related to this. The progressive "de-nationalisation of economy and society" (Lang 2001, p. 94), which we have called "dual privatisation", is associated with the attempt to relocate women's "core competences" back to the family or to communal care work. This strategy is rarely referred to in public as the offloading of costs, which it in fact is, but rather as the reconnection with neglected female desires and living spaces. We thus witness the risk of "relocation of socio-political debates in the private sphere of individual concepts and options for action" (ibid.) – a process which is supported by neo-liberal ideas of individualism.

It turns out that the actual course of the shift of the societal boundary immanent in the neo-liberal project depends to a large extent on the way in which gender constructions and gender orders of globalisation processes are registered and changed, and on how men and women position and define themselves in these changes. In terms of gender policy, this also raises the question whether the received conceptual instruments are suitable to generate solutions adequate for problem-solving and given situations. Therefore the need and at the same time the opportunity pose themselves to develop an inclusive concept of the political, one which outlines the requirements for the democratic structuring of sustainability in a globalised context and which in its transformatory perspective also addresses the re-ordering of gender relations.

### ***Global governance with potential for women's politics?***

With some reservations, feminist theoreticians see links to the global governance debate. There are two main reasons:

- The normative approach, the significance of human rights and the value orientation which the civil society plays a key role in formulating offer the opportunity to connect with the feminist debate on women's rights as human rights.
- The concepts of social and political action contained more or less explicitly in global governance and the proposals for a new concept of democracy in a global world are in principle socially anchored and transcend boundaries, and as such are open for the positions and convictions of the international women's movements.

In her report for the Study Commission, Ilse Lenz comments: "Global governance and the new transnational network structures raise the question of democratic representation and political responsibility, because the mechanisms from the national framework will not be effective in an international framework and will have to be developed further." And she adds in a footnote: "Global governance could offer a highly-interesting experimental field in gender politics for new forms of democracy such as participatory and deliberative approaches." (Lenz 2002, p. 78 f.) For years, feminist analysts have been studying the extent to which globalisation processes "completely reconfigure economic, social, political and symbolic spheres at local, national and transnational levels [...] leading as a result to new gender-specific forms of individualisation and politicisation" (Appelt/Sauer 2001, p. 130). In other words, they are primarily interested in examining the extent to which the democracy problems raised by the restructuring of the political sphere offer potential for gender-political transformation goals.

It is not surprising that feminist theoreticians soon found themselves drawn to the concept of global governance. Their starting point is:

"the social transformation of the political as a doubly unavoidable project within the framework of neo-liberal globalisation. Unavoidable firstly because the process of globalisation generates social transformations and among other things fundamentally changes the political arena. But also unavoidable because the quality of these changes makes a comprehensive social treatment, i.e. social responses to globalisation [...] essential both for factual and for ethical-moral reasons" (Ruppert 1998, p. 95).

From the start there was criticism of the idealising view of the "global civil society" or "social world", blind to gender democracy, as well as of the static global governance architecture with its stylised column structure, in contrast to which there were calls for open-ended communicative and participatory processes (Ruf 1997). This is, however, by no means regarded as the only suitable approach. Seen as a strategy for international social regulation, global governance may well prove to be empirically open and process-oriented as well as amenable to normative gender-democratic postulates (Lenz 2001). The questions introduced from a feminist perspective are e.g.: what should global negotiation

systems and processes look like in order to have a good chance of being able to achieve feminist goals? Which institutional arrangements of democratic process offer feminists opportunities for intervention?

The feminist intervention in the debate can draw on the discourses and practices developed to the fullest and to a highly professional level during the UN Decade of Women (1975–85) and in the series of conferences of the United Nations on the major topics of humanity in the 1990s. Local feminist discourse and practices have long since transnationalised. The international women's movements, on the basis of consolidating human rights-based arguments, have developed logics of identity and solidarity which are rightly ascribed the quality of a *global* civil society (Alvarez 2000). With the self-perception of having set out to achieve the full democratisation of every-day life, the international women's movements can indeed point to relevant process experience. Those with a feminist perspective entering into the global governance debate do so “under the aspect of redefining the original liberal idea of steering in a comprehensive emancipatory project” (Ruppert 1998, p. 95, also Ruppert 2002).

### *Opening the agenda*

In important points the majority of feminist theories draw on the discussion of the relationship between state and civil society influenced by Gramsci and continue this in their own critique of patriarchy. They criticise post-Fordist regulation approaches because these privilege the male ‘normal working relationships’ and neglect gender-specific role ascriptions. However, they do not view these weaknesses as being systematic, but rather see them as avoidable one-sided formulations (Ruf 1997). The critique of power inherent in the concept of civil society and a societal definition of the political space which is not limited to the public sphere open up opportunities to include patriarchal hegemonial relations integrally in the debate. It is not necessary to introduce these as a separate element. By taking up the Gramscian concept of hegemony, the actions and self-perceptions of the international women's movements can be viewed as the termination of the consensus within which women had previously been operating more or less without question. The withdrawal of legitimisation from the patriarchal hegemonial consensus represents an historical-cultural caesura, which is to be defended once again within the globalisation process.

It is not surprising that feminist theoreticians (e.g. Benhabib, Butler, Holland-Cunz) have participated actively in the debate on *citizenship* in the context of globalisation and cultural differentiation in local and national spheres. There are a number of approaches with a gender-specific version of citizenship at their centre. Firstly, with this analytical category the gender-specific inequality in citizenship is scrutinised. And secondly, it is used with the normative intent of formulating a concept of the political process which is in a position to secure the fundamental postulates of human rights and democracy. It is thus increasingly at the centre of normative discourses in which core questions regarding the protection and extension of rights and expectations for which the women's movements have worked for decades at national and international levels. At the same time it also represents an attempt

to go beyond the corporatist concept of participatory democracy which characterises the global governance debate. The conditions for democratic political communication are a particular focal point, and as a result these approaches tend towards a concept of deliberative democracy. In contrast to liberal and also neo-Gramscian views of civil society, following Habermas, civil society is located outside the privately constituted levels of labour, capital, and commodity markets, in the sphere of the world of everyday life. Here a democratic potential can be recruited in a process of deliberative politics which acts into the global sphere.

The gender-coding of the public and the private terrain brought out by feminist analysts brings patriarchal ascriptions, justifications, and norms onto the agenda, which can be discussed directly and on an equal footing within the framework of a critique of hegemony inspired by Gramsci. The questions raised in the debate on democratic theory regarding the premises and implications for the organisation of society in gender coded and dichotomised public and private spaces and the constitution of gender relations in both spaces equally orients the analysis along an, as it were, continuous axis of critique of power and subordination. At the same time, as mentioned, it shares the premise that the implications of globalisation processes reaching far into everyday life also – specifically because of the concomitant debate on new and adequate orders and norms – open up opportunities for the re-determination of the social meaning of gender-identities and gender relations. To this extent from a feminist standpoint “*engendering global politics*” represents an indispensable and permanent aspect of global politics. Conversely, from the perspectives of women politics and feminism, it is possible to establish lines of argumentation and orientations which can provide promising crystallisation points for a concept of democratic political action in the global arena as well as for the contours of corresponding institutions. They may prove much more suited to show the way to political results which in terms both of democratic theory and strategy provide more justice, and also more gender justice. Chapter 4 will outline some such reflections. Before that, however, the following chapter will address the tension between globalisation and sustainability as well as the orientation towards the common good endangered by the present-day globalisation process, a topic which has recently re-entered the debate by way of the newly emerging discussion on global public goods.



### 3 Global Governance and sustainability

As important as the concept of global governance may be in view of the international problems, and as correct as the involvement of civil society may be, the approach of the Study Commission nevertheless shows two weaknesses. Firstly, it adopts a defensive stance where it leaves the dominance of the international markets untouched. The political project is intended solely to help to remove negative economic, social and environmental trends, without considering the dynamic which gives rise to them. Secondly, the references to a minimum ethical consensus, to undertakings by businesses, or to “soft institutions” are scarcely suited to oppose the neoliberally dominated globalisation processes with a political approach with a substantial democratic content. It would be like trying to divert an approaching avalanche past environmentally and socially sensitive locations by means of a social dialogue. Furthermore, the debates on global governance and sustainability have so far proceeded along markedly different tracks. Whereas the governance debate concentrates on the problem of political control in the globalisation process and the associated democracy deficits, the sustainability debate addresses in particular environmental load capacities and, in part, questions of justice. But the two debates are rarely linked with each other.

The sustainability debate ignited by the problem of limits (to natural resources and load capacities, in part also to the extent of domination of nature), as well as by the resultant need to reduce the use of natural resources. It centred on the problem of justice, both internationally and between generations. Initially, the debate often included critical and emancipatory contributions aimed at bringing the overexploitation of nature and the neglect of aspects of justice into connection with a reformulation of social natural relationships. Over time, however, more and more strategies have established themselves which aim to introduce new developments while retaining old rationalities. Nature is viewed within the framework of “strong sustainability” (see e.g. Victor, 1991 and Minsch et al. 1996) as worthy of protection as the basis for human production, but only in its property as a resource which should continue to be available for exploitation. This reduces nature to its economic utility. Within the context of “weak sustainability” there is no reason why nature should not be replaced using technology so that the ability for natural regeneration and reproduction are no longer needed and no longer have to be taken into consideration.

The modern control over nature is hardly called into question, as if the dominance over nature were only the basis for social welfare and social space and therefore should not be called into question. But a critical review of social relationships to nature show that domination over nature also marks and structures society as a whole. This means that in particular with respect to sustainability it is necessary to scrutinise enlightenment and the social contracts resulting from it. Sustainable governance, if it wishes to be more than just an environmental policy providing support for globalisation processes, not only has to resolve the problem of which globalisation should be sustainable, but also which patterns of rationality govern the deficits in democracy which are related to globalisation

and sustainability. We approach this question initially at the theoretical level and focus on approaches to global environmental management. We then discuss the problem of dominance over nature, before finally considering the concept of global public goods.

### 3.1 Global governance and global environmental management

The mere fact that the discussion of globalisation in German-speaking countries has so far used the English term “*governance*”, without having its own suitable equivalent, in itself signals the need for a *restructuring and redetermination of political structures*. At the same time, there are widespread discussions about how globalisation processes transform economic, environmental, social, political and symbolic spheres at local, national and transnational levels.

In this process, governance has from the start had a double face. On the one hand, it allows new forms of politics in a situation in which the old ones are no longer sufficient, and thus opens up opportunities for new negotiation processes. On the other hand, as already mentioned, its policies threaten to come off the rails where the public matters and common goods are increasingly made the responsibility of private business. A concept of sustainable governance cannot involve simply extracting the best possible undertaking from private actors to provide minimum protection for the environment. Rather there is a need to use as orientation some form of “social contract” which covers both social nature relationships and gender justice.

However, it is hardly possible to achieve sustainability when defining only economic, environmental and social goals. This triangle lacks from the start the political dimension, which is essential to integrate sustainability or sustainability strategies in the living sphere of political communities. The political dimension is reflected inadequately in sustainability strategies, in particular when sustainability is understood as a global management strategy. And in the globalisation debate, economic and environmental considerations are frequently regarded as being in competition. Either emphasis is placed on the priority of the economy, or regret is expressed concerning the defensive environmental position in the globalisation context. But actually globalisation and sustainability can harmonise very well, and the more the political dimension is excluded the better they get on.

There is such exclusion when, in accordance with the “three pillar model “ (in particular in the Final Report of the Study Commission “Protecting People and the Environment” of the 13th German Bundestag, 1998) the economic, the environmental and the social dimension of sustainability are to be handled equally and with their mutual interactions. Apart from the fact that this is usually not achieved, and the three dimensions are often dealt with in a vocabulary which is steeped in economics, such a model lacks the political dimension. This also becomes clear to the proponents of this approach to sustainability, at the latest when critical questions are asked about the ability of the available institutional structures to implement sustainable development.



The sustainability concept of the “syndrome approach” (in particular in the annual report of the advisory council of the German government “Global Environmental Changes”, WBGU 1999) also fails to take the political dimension sufficiently into account. The syndrome approach addresses the “Earth system as a whole”, claims to present a new analytical method for the holistic examination of the current crisis, and it structures this using syndromes such as the spread of the deserts. The political element is excluded here, for example, because the approach works with a definition of the problem which is exclusively in terms of natural sciences, and which views environmental problems as a complex system of material flows and energy transformation processes. The social structures and democratic processes are not considered, neither when describing the problem, nor in the search for solutions. But if the problem of sustainability appears to be eco-systemic then it would seem logical to try to solve it by means of global environmental management, which would only worsen the democracy problem inherent in the global governance architecture.

The model of sustainable development was specified according to Ulrich Brand and Christoph Görg “above all in the form of an economisation of nature“ (Görg; Brand 2002, p. 15). Seen in this way, sustainable development does *not* represent an *antithesis* to neoliberal globalisation, but is assimilated by it; at the same time it is robbed of its critical content, or at least neutralised.

Our initial hypothesis, that the integration of sustainability and globalisation is only possible if democracy is thought and practised differently, is not compatible with the ideas of global environmental management – possibly even implemented top-down by a powerful government authority. This is firstly because the intervention is usually purely instrumental (related to the “resource” environment), and secondly because the global environmental management as implemented is biased towards technocratic control optimism or *managerism* (ibid., 2002, p. 32). This means that the integration of governance and sustainability can become the sole responsibility of experts who define the necessary environmental measures in detail without being embedded in a democratic setting. To what extent, then, does a sustainable governance approach consolidate an instrumentalised approach to nature – which in turn contributes significantly to generating global environmental problems?

It is important to take this problem into consideration when dealing with the intersection between governance, democracy and sustainability. And rather than carrying out global environmental management in the sense of perfected control over nature, we should look closely at the problematic paradigm of control over nature.

### 3.2 A digression into the problem of dominance over nature

A forerunner of globalisation, according to the final report published by the Study Commission, was Eurocentric world trade. Its roots can be traced back to the centuries of the (European) seafarers with their great discoveries, the conquest of the “New World” and the formation of colonies. This first flowered in the seventeenth century and was, initially, extremely one-sided and consisted primarily of exploitation of the colonies by European powers (Enquete 2002, p. 49).

In addition to the purely geographic journeys of conquest and Eurocentric world trade, yet another dimension came into being. It was the English Lord Chancellor Francis Bacon who at that time, in his work entitled *Novum Organum*, presented the notion that in the course of the general invention of government, nature would also have to be governed. He wanted this to be understood as a kind of journey of intellectual conquest by way of which, now that the New World had been discovered physically, it should also and ultimately be discovered intellectually. Among the many postulates in his programme for the dominance of nature, Francis Bacon determined that:

1. “... our principal object is to make nature subservient to the state and wants of man, ...” (Adler 1996, p. 159).
2. “... nature is only subdued by submission, ...” (ibid., p. 137). This means that one can subdue nature only by submitting to her; the intellect will have to adapt itself to nature if it wishes to dictate her actions.
3. With the benefit of divine grace he, Francis Bacon, decorated the nuptial bed of intellect and nature. “The wedding song’s entreaty is that the issue of this marriage may be assistance to humankind and a line of inventors, to ease and banish need and desolation.” (Bacon [1620] 1990, 2nd Book, p. 51).

In this “programme for government”, aimed at domination, nature is firstly thought of as being homogenous, like the human states and wants. All across the face of the earth nature is to be made subservient to human purposes, which are everywhere identical. Secondly, nature serves exclusively human ends. She has no other, let alone her own, agenda. Thirdly, Francis Bacon conceptualises a “clever” dominance of nature, one which is adapted to nature. The mechanical arts of his time – today referred to as technology – are to dominate nature in accordance with and not contrary to nature. Fourthly, nature is granted no realm of action on her own; she is to develop in accordance with human purposes. Fifthly, “nature” is thought of as being feminine whilst “intellect” is masculine; but they are to be reconciled or married one with the other. There derives from this, sixthly, a masculine lineage of inventors with whose aid the vicissitudes of the world would best be mastered.

Many of Bacon’s comments are appropriate to his own age. What remains for us today, however, is Bacon’s programme: By mastering nature it is possible to return to Paradise

on earth and to live in prosperity. One hardly realises how “Baconian” many of the solutions put forth in conjunction with the ecology crisis and the sustainability debate actually are. Whenever, by way of science and technology, we are to dominate nature more effectively, more cleverly or just differently, that is where we find ourselves in the middle of Bacon’s mindset. Bacon’s guiding principle – that humankind should master nature and by so doing could continuously improve its situation – remains valid down to this very day. The threshold at which one might say that the Baconian era has come to, or is drawing to, an end is found where this guiding principle – the improvement of the human situation by the mastery of nature – is questioned. In the prevailing debate, however, anyone who objects to the Baconian paradigm is all too easily cast in the role of an enemy of humanity or, at least, of progress.

Consequently it is useful to recall what the philosophising Lord Chancellor of an up-and-coming world power was actually getting at: dictating the actions of others – be it nature, be it women, be it other peoples. The prerequisite here is that one’s own latitude for action either destroys or nullifies that of the other. Here an analysis critical of dominance unavoidably comes to the fore. To be examined here are the Baconian programme of dominance over nature and the patterns of rationalism and mastery upon which it is based. This is particularly urgent when it must be assumed that dominance of nature is not limited to “nature proper”, but instead pervades society as a whole:

- If natural resources can be reduced to their utility as an economic resource, then human resources can be reduced to exactly the same denominator.
- If nature is seen as inferior when compared with intellect or reason, and thus split off in dualist fashion, then this approach will not stop at human beings and human capacities, which are “naturalised” and then declared inferior.
- If it is possible to deal with nature only as “something apart” and only in terms of destruction, subjugation or assimilation, then this also threatens those declared to be members of “other” social groups, particularly when the dualistic touchstone of “good” and “evil” is employed.

As has already been mentioned, the instrumental aspect in Bacon’s understanding of nature is found in the fact that he intends to interpret nature in order to “to make nature subservient to the state and wants of man”. This is seen in his *Aphorisms Concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man* (ibid., pp. 81 f.), which form the core of the *Novum Organum*. The problem is not to be found in the fact that he wishes to use nature for human purposes but rather that this is the only form of access to nature. Nature is to be governed – and this in an era in which, as Michel Foucault formulated, the structures of power are being made ever more “government-like” (Foucault 1999, p. 128). But governing also means structuring the potential field of action for the other – it means governance which intervenes and controls.

Viewed in this way, the advance of globalisation is currently being driven by a neoliberal concept which is Baconist. Its first goal is to prevent any other action at all and in so doing references itself especially to the paradigm of unlimited trade, subject to no restrictions

whatsoever. Secondly, unhindered access to nature as a resource, purely utilitarian in character, is assigned exclusively to unfettered trade.

Approaches which place sustainable governance close to global management of the environment can hardly offer any opposition here. They presuppose uniform, world-wide interest in a globalised and uniformly disciplined nature. They take into account neither the variety of natural phenomena and ways of dealing with nature nor democratic access to natural goods. Thus the view of the particular – though dominant – interests is obscured, which is seen above all in regard to resource access (Klare, 2001). Moreover, favoured here is a development path in technology (to dominate nature) in which uniform interest among all participants is assumed and which, in addition, takes hardly any consideration of natural givens and the forms for the use of nature, both of which vary widely from place to place.

Departing from the Baconian paradigm of dominance over nature is difficult. It would mean questioning the pattern of rationalism which is inherent to the West along with other rationalities; it would imply in particular recognising alternate ways of dealing with nature. The consequence would be that a democratically substantive concept of “sustainable governance” prohibits government being made subservient to neoliberal concepts of absolute privatisation. This would mean that the “resource” which is nature – or its technical and industrial substitute – would be available to global competition without restriction and nature as a “commodity” would be freely traded. Governance would then be nothing more than a helpless attempt by the government to compensate, at least in part and by way of resource management, for the deficits which had in fact been caused by government itself.

### **3.3 Globalisation, privatisation and global public goods**

*Global governance*, according to the Final Report of the Enquete Commission “Globalisation of the World Economy – Challenges and Responses,” is oriented towards a “socially and environmentally sustainable conservation, protection and the management of public goods “ (Enquete 2002, p. 418). These public goods include peace, respect for human rights, social justice and an “intact environment”. For example, “climate” is a global public good (ibid., p. 56). The threat to or neglect of public duties and public goods, according to the report, represents perhaps the most significant threat of a globalisation which concentrates mainly on the increase in private goods by increasing global efficiency (ibid.). Obviously, the Study Commission hopes to be able to counter this effectively with the concept of global public goods. We will now look at this approach, and in particular the work of Inge Kaul et al., although we reach different conclusions.

It remains the task of the state to ensure sufficient equality, since the market economy cannot care alone for the well-being of all (ibid., p. 55). Therefore in global governance democratic legitimated actors should win back power to act against global problems and

not only react to the initiatives of powerful private actors within and beyond their borders (ibid., p. 420 & 421). At the same time, global governance should work effectively against the negative effects of neoliberal globalisation. Such a defensive strategy, however, runs the risk of being ineffective. The negative effects of environmental policy are clearly visible in chapter 8 about sustainable development. The sustainability model discussed adds hardly anything new to the debate, and in particular little which would be effective. Rather, it uncritically adopts the three-pillar model (environmental, economic and social sustainability) favoured in 1998 by the Enquete Commission 'Protecting People and the Environment' and regards this as an important orientation for a sustainability strategy. But the three-pillar model has been widely criticised not only because it excludes the political, but also because of the effective dominance of its economic dimension (e.g. Jungkeit, Katz, Weber, Winterfeld 2002).

In recent years the concept of global public goods has established itself as a new frame of reference for the international debate on liberalisation and privatisation, the public or private nature of goods, and the future role of states and international organisations. The discussions about the contours of the concept and the strategies for financing and managing global public goods are still in their early stages. When it was adopted in 1998/99 in UNDP circles (see Kaul et al. 1999), this was against the background of the financial crisis in Asia and repeatedly postponed conference on development financing. The central problem were the bottlenecks in development cooperation and the attempt to reinterpret (*reframe*) requirements and impacts as a way of mobilising more resources from the private economy for development cooperation. Development facts, the argument runs, should be weighted with respect to reciprocity and collective responsibility (ibid., p. xiii) and to this extent should be viewed in terms of an understanding of global public goods. The book published in 1999 has the sub-title "International cooperation in the 21st century" and redefines a whole range of sectors from road signs through biodiversity to peace and just distribution in the light of the new frame of reference.

The impulse met with considerable interest, although the debate has not yet produced consolidated results or led to conceptual clarification. Analytical and normative dimensions of the concept of global public goods are often unwittingly mixed. However, positions are beginning to crystallise out. In particular civil society proponents tend to group around the concept of commons or common goods, such as air and water, which are not commodities in any form and which should not be subjected to economic exigencies as traded goods (e.g. Petrella 2000, Shiva 2002). Water is certainly an unsaleable good, and its acquisition and use is to be a matter for collective responsibility, with decisions made decentrally within the setting of local practice.

Efforts from the civil society reach into the field of the political institutions in order to link up to the concept of global public goods and to give this a form which mixes public and private elements specifically for each situation. But here the public character of a good is not based on the property of the good itself, but is regarded as a social construct and political convention. A good becomes public or private only as a result of regulative measures. These measures are disputed and are the subject of social and political

conflicts. Every definition of global public goods and each decision about what should be treated as such therefore represents a political act, which must be subject to decisions within democratic structures and procedures.

The privatisation of an area of supply which has previously been recognised as a public good is always associated with a loss of the public openness and thus with a restriction of democratic participation. In countries of the South the further consequence of the shift may be a loss of civil status. Anybody who cannot pay for their needs falls outside the system, and can at best hope for support from development cooperation. The World Bank (2003) clearly views the transfer to customer status more positively. Compared with the long political path, the short route via influence on service providers is much to be preferred. Whether people actually have the opportunity to take this route, or whether such a shift of existential public services will also lead to the sale of human rights and civil rights is not something they worry about. But it worries us.

The context of globalisation, deregulation and privatisation and the extreme pressure in particular regarding water management in North and South, not least from the powerful international development agencies towards the privatisation of water supplies, has contributed considerably towards making public goods a topic of debate. Is the concept of global public goods suited to preserving existential public services, an orientation to public welfare, and social controllability as values and as the social practice? Concerning the neoliberal pressure on water as a resource and as a freely tradable good, which attitudes and actions are most suited and able to oppose this pressure?

Inge Kaul, Pedro Conceicao, Katell Le Goulven, and Ronald U. Mendoza tackled this problem in their book “Providing Global Public Goods: Managing Globalisation” (2003) with a clear emphasis on the level of implementation, but the answers fill us with scepticism. Is the provision of global public goods really a way to manage globalisation? Or is it more part of the problem than part of the solution?

Globalisation, according to the book, gives rise to global goods as well as global bads, and at the same time is driven by these (Kaul et al. 2003, p. 3). They are therefore an element of globalisation. If this is to be managed, then the relationship between the public and private must be re-invented. Concepts of public and private are in most cases social constructs. Public goods are usually described as goods of the public realm, but not goods provided by the state (ibid., p. 7). State authorities and markets can themselves be regarded as public goods (ibid.). Here things become unclear and it sounds almost as if the problems associated with globalisation can be solved in a new public-private partnership by self-management of the global goods ‘state’ and ‘market’.

In an historical review of public goods (ibid., p. 63–77) it is emphasised that public goods are often thought to be provided by the state. This, according to the authors is false in the current situation, because non-state actors are increasingly involved at both national and international levels. In addition, state expenditure for public goods is relatively young, historically speaking. Until the seventeenth century most state funds were spent on war.



It was only in the course of industrialisation that countries began to spend a significant part of the state budget on the provision of public goods such as water. Often this did not happen without a struggle. A theory of public goods was developed in the “Golden years” of Keynesianism from 1945 to 1975, which at the same time was marked by enormous state growth. However, this period was an exception. Therefore it is necessary to take a new look at public goods and revise the concept. Public goods are not simply provided at the global level, and the public must be involved much more in the formulation of preferences. Participation is not required in the consumption of public goods, but in their production. How this is to be achieved remains an open question.

Global public goods, according to Kaul et al., can be regarded as the sum of national public goods and international cooperation. Therefore the largest part of the global public goods are nationally financed (ibid., p. 36). The financing of global public goods (such as international communication or transport systems) often functions very well and attracts private investors, because charges can be levied. However, there are many other global goods which are dependent on subsidies, as witnessed by the fact that currently some 30 per cent of development aid is in the form of global public goods (ibid., p. 38). In the vision of the international community of the international public sphere ten global goods are identified, namely:

- 1) basic human dignity,
- 2) national sovereignty,
- 3) global public health,
- 4) global security,
- 5) global peace,
- 6) harmonised, trans-boundary communication and transport systems,
- 7) harmonised, trans-boundary institutional infrastructures,
- 8) common management of knowledge,
- 9) common management of global natural “commons” in order to promote their sustainable use,
- 10) the availability of international arenas for multilateral negotiations between states, and also between states and non-state actors (ibid., p. 44).

This shows, firstly, that “global public goods” refers to very different things at different levels. Secondly, another concept is used when talking of sustainability, namely not “goods” but “commons.” Correspondingly, water could be included twice in this list, under institutional infrastructures and global natural “commons”.

The debate on *commons* was instigated by Garrett Hardin (1968) and immediately became linked with the term “tragedy.” But reviews of his essay on “The Tragedy of the Commons” have frequently overlooked the fact that Hardin was actually focussing on the problem of population growth. He was searching for moral arguments for the restriction of liberties, or for achieving moderation – both in the use of *commons* as well as in reproduction. According to our view, this combination is highly problematical, but is hardly discussed.

If a common good is left for free use, then the tragedy for Garrett Hardin is that everybody tries to use as much of the limited resource as possible for their own advantage, which finally leads to the ruin of all (Hardin 1968, p. 1244). The situation is similar with the problem of pollution. Something which is available to all is exploited and defiled as long as all behave as independent and rational free entrepreneurs (ibid., p. 1245). His conclusion is not the limitation of free entrepreneurship, but the abolition of the communal exploitation of *commons*. The system of private property and its inheritance is unjust, but such an injustice is preferable to the ruin of all (ibid., p. 1247). In a later text (Hardin 1978) he sees only two possible solutions: Private enterprise or socialism (control of the *commons* by the government). He does not see other options.

The best-known response to Garrett Hardin has been formulated by David Feeny, Fikret Berkes, Bonnie J. McCay, und James M. Acheson. They argue expressly against setting up a stark alternative between Market and State. In “The Tragedy of the Commons: Twenty-two Years Later” (Feeny et al. 1990) they also tackle the assumption that the communal use of resources leads to their exploitation or degradation. Their first step is to distinguish between the resource itself and the ownership rights. Instead of *commons* they use the term “common-pool resources.” What Hardin refers to as a tragedy is actually the lack of well-defined ownership rights. This applies for “open access” elements, which are subject to a free-for-all. But it does not apply in the case of communal property, which is managed by an identifiable community where the users are dependent on one another. The authors distinguish between four categories of ownership rights: free access, private ownership, common ownership, and state ownership. For the latter three categories, they present both positive and negative examples of sustainable and non-sustainable use of common goods. Therefore it is not possible to say for any form of property that it was the only one or the best for a sustainable approach to *commons*. But what Garrett Hardin referred to as the tragedy of the *commons* only applies after conditions have been created which allow free access to common goods. However, this was usually the result of the introduction of colonial rule, for example in the sub-Saharan region or on the Pacific islands (ibid., p. 6).

A similar approach is adopted by Vandana Shiva when considering the examples of the colonial destruction of communal water management in Southern India in the 18th Century (Shiva 2002, p. 24). Commons, she emphasises, are not resources with open access. They require a concept of property at the level of user groups which establish rules for their use. The absence of private property can by no means be equated with lawlessness. Nor is resource management linked to private individuals (ibid., p. 26). Against this background, the statements of Garrett Hardin seem factually and historically questionable. This point is raised among others by Gerhard Scherhorn (1998a and 1998b). The displacement of common goods, he explains, should be interpreted somewhat differently than in the legend of the greedy users. Historically, the common land was enclosed as grazing land (for wool production), and the local small-holders who has previously been able to use it were driven away. The principle of common goods was not undermined by the users but was broken by the usurpers.



If the breakdown of the *commons* is not attributed to the search for benefit by the individual user, but to a new form of cooperation between state and business (which promotes private property and undermines communal property), then this results in new solution strategies. At the same time these are associated with another approach to politics: In their actions, people are not only (and possibly also not primarily) motivated to be socially and environmentally aware by material advantages (market) or drastic sanctions (state). Rather, they are also able to act with awareness simply if they are allowed to, or when their socially and environmentally motivated actions are not undermined. However, there is an obvious danger of painting a picture of traditional societies free from all ambivalence. For Vandana Shiva, for example, it is the indigenous communities who created the rules and limitations for water use and with this guarantee sustainability and equality in the dealings with water (Shiva 2002, p. 12). For Gerhard Scherhorn feudal societies were based on a principle of mutual solidarity, in which the peasants worked the land owned by their feudal lord, who in turn represented and protected them (Scherhorn, 1998b). He does, though, concede that while this was the *ideal*, the reality may often have been rather different (1998a). There is a considerable risk of idealising traditional societies, particularly when they can serve as a counter-model to current globalisation developments. We do not assume that indigenous or feudal societies were *per se* more free, more sustainable or more egalitarian. In particular the peasants in the later Middle Ages were feudally subordinate. And the pre-colonial access to water may frequently have been regulated by hierarchies – including gender hierarchies. It is hardly possible to derive principles from this for a *sustainable governance* in the current situation. However, there is one parallel: Local communal management and communities are broken up in accordance with central or centralistic requirements, which immediately set themselves up as irreplaceable and permit no alternatives.

The concept of global public goods is only in part able to set a counterpoint. The intended new relationship between public and private as well as state and market obscures the fact that to this day both have partially failed with respect to global natural *commons*. One reason for this probably lies in what Vandana Shiva notes in her seventh principle of a “Water democracy”: “Water is not a human invention. It cannot be bound and has no boundaries. It is by nature a commons. It cannot be owned as private property and sold as a commodity” (Shiva 2002, p. 36). The new nexus of market and state can at best be applied to the supply and disposal, that is to the infrastructures, but not to water as *common*. But basically infrastructures and *commons* point to a similar problem: Whereas the immense intensification of water management is intended to market the resource water as profitably as possible, not only the need for its regeneration has been neglected but also the ecological water cycle.<sup>4</sup> Whereas elements of infrastructure are currently being removed from the scope of public services and made freely tradable commodities, there is the risk that the specific local environmental requirements for an appropriate and sustainable

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4 Significantly, the first chapter of the Gender and Water Development Report (2003) is dedicated to the topic of „Water for Nature“.

water and sewerage service will be ignored, as will the social context of the infrastructures. Against this background there is not really a need for a conception of global public goods which re-configures the public and the private spheres. Rather, in connection with *sustainable governance* there is a need for a political approach which encourages and protects a varied sustainable governance from below for each locality and is active for this in an international context. The concept of “commons” seems better suited for this. It indicates (e.g. in Elinor Ostrom et al. 2002) that the use of common goods is inseparably linked to the question of property rights. “When no property rights define who can use a common pool resource and how its uses are regulated, a common pool resource is under an open-access regime.” (Ostrom et al. 2002, p. 18)

There must be doubts whether the existing approaches to global governance will be able, in the intersection between globalisation, democracy and sustainability, to work against the deficits associated with globalisation in the fields of democracy and the environment. It is not enough to show new control procedures and new constellations of actors. What we have referred to as “double privatisation” in the neoliberal project increasingly shifts the production and care of public goods into the sphere of action of the private economy, where systematic self-regulation is preferred to state regulation, and thus a core area of state duties is withdrawn from the sphere of popular influence. The transfer of control and decision processes to new fluctuating transboundary constellations of actors also contributes towards a loss of democratic procedures of authorisation and public communications channels.

A relationship between governance, democracy, and sustainability outside the Baconian programme for dominance over nature implies firstly different contents and forms of government and secondly another restructuring of the political sphere than that of double privatisation. At the centre of a new formulation of democracy, based on sustainable globalisation there would not only be a democracy deficit concerning the institutions and procedures. Rather the debate would concentrate on a sustainable concept of the political which would not centre on the conventional “governing” in the sense of “steering, or ruling”, but is based on widely varying local, cultural abilities and customs for the formation of social-environmental relationships, and at the same time enables these. Inasmuch, it is not only a matter of adding the failing political dimension to the so-called three-pillar model and to insist on the political shaping of sustainability. The task is also to combine the general questions of democratic theory with that of democratic access to natural goods. This also addresses alternatives to thinking and action relating to the domination of nature. At the theoretical level, an alternative approach has been developed in a study of the *Helmholtz Gemeinschaft* (Kopfmüller et al., 2001). No attempt is made to integrate the political level in the three-pillar model. Rather, the general demand for common values was taken up and a normative foundation outlined for sustainable development. From this, minimum demands were derived as well as rules and indicators (ibid., p. 179 f.). However, this approach remained at the anthropocentric level, i.e. nature is viewed solely at the anthropocentric level. The only proviso is that the anthropocentrism should be “enlightened”. But this obscures the way to less dominant approaches to nature. In order to reshape and rethink democracy, it is not enough to integrate minimum demands and

basic regulations for sustainable development into the existing globalisation procedures. Rather the aim is to combine other approaches to nature with democratic structuring. This aspect can be illustrated using the example of water.

The sustainable treatment of water, beyond the Baconian dominance of nature, would have to leave, as a first step, the level of abstraction of a homogeneous global natural good to be handled in the same way all over the world. Abstract references to “water” cover a number of aspects. Whereas there is “open access” to oceans, rivers are usually subject to national governments. Supplies of clean water and sewerage systems, on the other hand, are usually organised at the communal level. At the same time, water does not meet the same human needs everywhere. The goals of someone who relies on water to sustain life are different from the goals of those who want to make profits with supplying water and sewerage services. The water itself cannot be subjected as some abstract generality to a technological apparatus for dominating nature, but must be perceived, accepted and treated in its specific qualities and manifestations.

Lyla Metha therefore proposes an “integrated water management” in connection with the concept of global public goods (see Kaul et al. 2003, pp. 556 - 575). She queries the use of the term public with regard to access rights to water, and emphasises that water is far from having the properties of a global public good. The access to water reflects power asymmetries, shows socio-economic inequalities and other distribution factors such as land ownership (ibid., p. 556). Therefore it is important to distinguish between the abstract designation of water as a common resource and water as resource in real life. Integrated water management could take account of such differences and can be based on the access to water as a human right. The supply with water must be organised on the basis of the various water systems; they must sometimes be managed locally, at other times national or even trans-nationally. The challenge for “water governance” lies in achieving a balance between the principles of subsidiarity and global governance. Water must not be traded as a global good on an open market, because this would seriously undermine the right to water. Efforts are necessary to ensure access to water for all people and to guarantee an appropriate supply, embedded in local realities, and combined with global actions and concerns (ibid., p. 570).

## 4 On the necessity for alternative models

The governance discussion touches on a number of levels and fields. It is conducted from a number of different standpoints and orientations, depending on the force of tradition, the perceived urgency of problems and the socio-economic structuring of the field of actors. Here we refer mainly to the debate in the German-speaking countries, and focus on specific key aspects for a concept of sustainable governance, namely that of the underlying conceptualisations of nature and politics.

We argue that the conceptual formulations of both nature and politics contain a variety of restrictions and distortions rooted in the logic of dominance which should not be included in a future proposal for the relationship between sustainability and democracy in the context of globalisation. We conclude that before new institutions and methodologies are developed, which will certainly be much more “concrete” than the considerations presented here, and before this is possible with a justifiable claim to be ‘new’ and ‘different’, the contents of the concepts must be subjected to a critical analysis, particularly with respect to a critique of power.

We have attempted to present the reasons for this in terms of the key points of the existing governance and sustainability concepts. On the basis of our analysis of weak points we could show that it will be difficult to remedy the problems if the political project of neo-liberal globalisation is dammed, in while the social causes of the breaking flood of global markets still remains untouched. Our consideration of alternative approaches shows that there are other possibilities for societalisation than those offered by neo-liberal globalisation. For example, the view of the problems of dominance-ridden societal relationships with nature only becomes clearer when nature is not conceived of as dead material lying beyond the political, only playing a role in the debate as an environmental resource. Similarly, the view of the power-affected societal market relations only becomes clearer when the market is not conceived of as an institutions remote from politics involving only private actors, who at best can be reined in somewhat.

As far as the necessary reformulation of democratic politics is concerned, it seems promising to orient towards an understanding of political economy – rather than constructing the market as a separate, independent sphere – with the introduction of the concept of hegemony as a level of analysis *sui generis*. This approach makes it possible to disclose the political in the economic, restoring the conceptual primacy of the political and thus also of community-related shaping (Krätke 2002). This seems more promising than the somewhat helpless postulatory demands in the conventional governance debate to shape and re-embed a rudderless economy. Just as in recent years end-of-pipe environmental protection has gradually become less important than the precautionary principle, so the retrospective democratisation of neo-liberal globalisation could give way to precautionary democratisation.

There is general agreement among those involved in the debate on global governance that globalisation has a fundamental effect on the form of the political, and that the political shaping of globalisation requires new boundaries to be drawn and opens up new terrain. Alongside the schools of thought discussed here we regard this situation as a “window of opportunity” to introduce genuinely democratic openings in the course of the unavoidable process of change. The search therefore is for the contours of a concept of the political which is appropriate for globalisation, and which in contrast to the dominant neo-liberal closures and sealing opens up the space and the ground for a reformulation of democratic claims, formulated from a perspective of gender responsibility. The on-going destruction of the political sphere by the apodictic and power-based construction of economic constraints should at least be confronted with the possibility of a bifurcation. But we do assume that there are no privileged and predefined actors of social change, nor central, theoretically predetermined starting points. It is just as impossible to determine generally valid institutional forms and structural settings. However, the critical review of the ‘fate’ of political processes under the conditions of neoliberal, patriarchally-formed globalisation can give indications of other possible directions.

A reformulation of the political will not stand without structural changes. The corresponding strategy proposals are referred to by the international women’s movements as ‘transformative politics’ or in left-wing politics as ‘radical reformism’. Whatever term is used, it is clear that there can hardly be a democratisation within the currently dominant parameters of globalisation. Key preconditions for democratic politics must first and foremost be regulated and secured by the nation states. That the nation state can still claim a fundamental role is also underlined by Inge Kaul et al. in their recent publication on the provision of global public goods. “The state is still responsible for translating policy consensus into binding policy decisions and perhaps law” (Kaul et al. 1999, p.182, see also Kaul et al. 2003). It also sets the binding framework for the communicative forms of democratic decision-making. The content of the canon of the common good and the global public goods, and the attitudes to gender justice and to nature are therefore of key importance. Strategies for reconquering the political sphere do not treat the state as a uniform actor, but regard it as a field for strategic action within and beyond which the points and levels of intervention must be found, and the starting points for new forms of political communalisation. To this extent, the contents and the location of nation-state governance is a central topic in the dispute about the global redetermination of the political. At the same time the search for new forms of democratic control and participation directs attention towards other levels, at which effective political community is formed.

All proposals for reconquering the political sphere agree that *transparency and accountability* must be secured at all levels. Already a decade ago, Narr and Schubert wrote that the first principle for a system of political institutions appropriate for globalisation was “to create conditions which enable the citizens everywhere to understand ‘their’ world which nowadays irrevocably has turned global, and to act in a way which is at least locally relevant” (Narr; Schubert 1994, p. 254). Transparency is one such essential condition. In the final analysis this involves nothing less than the recall of state accountability regarding the articulated concerns of citizenship. If the current prime responsibility of

state bodies towards the social forces of globalisation and the resultant logic of action is laid open, then at least the preconditions for democratic intervention are improved. At the local level, it may be easier to provide the evidence of options and decisions, in contrast to the claims of constraints. In any case, whether at local or international levels, the (further) development of democratic rules of procedure (rights to information, access, and a hearing) concerning the level of choice may extend beyond the national framework, but cannot leap over it.

What then gives credible democratic legitimacy to the decisions made by state bodies? There has been an interesting shift regarding this point in the dramaturgy of the global governance proponents. In 1992 there was still a difference between the two editors of the book "Governance without Government", which virtually launched the debate. Czempiel defined governance as "the capacity to get things done without the legal competence to command that they be done" (Czempiel 1992, p. 250); Rosenau, in contrast, as "a system of rule that is as dependent on intersubjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitutions and charters" (Rosenau 1992, p. 4). In this definition, the legitimacy of governance is derived as much from formally correct, legally binding political foundations as from shared interpretations. Ten years later, Rosenau based governance completely on authority and defines it as the "steering mechanism that produces compliance between relevant actors". Authority in turn is defined as "the effect that power exercises over those in the field of power" (lecture notes). But it will be recalled that in times of neoliberal deregulation and privatisation "this new normativity comes from the world of private power yet installs itself in the public realm and in so doing contributes to de-nationalizing what has historically been constructed as national state agendas" (Sassen 2000, p. 393), which can be recognised as pure hegemony. There is no need here for efforts to set up procedures of democratic legitimisation. The action of power which successfully gains consensus or suppresses dissent acquires legitimisation from within itself and from compliance. Both remain entirely unquestioned in terms of their democratic substance. It is precisely this closure to public participation and protest, aimed at securing hegemony, that the insistence on accountability takes issue with. If de-nationalisation is not seen as delimitation but as a shift in the logic of action of state agencies, then the common good is not served by any forms of participation within the framework of an externally-prescribed logic.

A very different concept of legitimacy, extending into a proposal for democracy, is presented by feminist theory. Of the various approaches, we refer mainly to authors such as Seyla Benhabib and Barbara Holland-Cunz who have addressed in particular questions of democracy and citizenship in the context of globalisation. As already commented, from the feminist perspective there is not only a downside to the fact that "the problematic of de-democratisation of governance in the course of its internationalisation cannot be overcome with a conventional understanding of democracy, with its eyes on a parliamentary majority democracy" (Wolf 2001, p. 7). The widely acknowledged erosion of parliamentary democracy is regarded as an opportunity to tackle the gender-political splitting of democracy.



Feminist theory draws key components of this process from views of democracy based on discursive theory with a more comprehensive understanding of democratic legitimacy. Here democratic development of an informed opinion is attributed an epistemic function. At the same time, additional sources of legitimisation can be included which are neglected by conventional political institutions. It is precisely these qualities, which allow for both elements of globalisation, however interpreted, and also gender democratic demands.

This is the starting point for Benhabib with her proposition for a *deliberative democracy*. In the model of deliberative democracy, the borders between the public and private spheres must be seen as discursive, debatable and politically redefinable. “Matters such as genders relations and the legal position of women and children, which are assigned in political liberalism to the private sphere, are viewed in the model of deliberative democracy as topics to be discussed in the public realm” (Benhabib 2000, p. 111 f.). Interdependencies of public virtues and private needs can thus take on a political form. This presupposes that the underlying discourse ethic does not judge only from the standpoint of formal justice. The central premises of the discourse ethic are universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity, i.e. norms which lead to the political and constitutional recognition of universal human rights, including both social and gender justice.

Democracy becomes a form of living founded on an active consensus which has to be re-established continuously. It includes space for the articulation of new actors involved in governance procedures. All those participating, including the private actors, cannot simply refer to a logic of action based on their own interests, like in classic participation procedures, but must plausibly demonstrate in the discourse their commitment to general norms. Discourses are therefore also learning processes, reaching into controversial normative questions of cultural and religious practice. It is not possible to determine once and for all how universal human rights can protect the individual, rather this is derived from the global, discrimination-free discourse within the cultural context. In this regard, democracy draws its legitimacy less from the observance of institutionally defined procedures than from the democratic quality of the processes of deliberation and decision-making.<sup>5</sup> It is thus a model of democratic legitimacy which does not by definition submit to the force of the factual. Rather, the reformulation of the political in the tension between locality, nation state and globality, necessary under any circumstances, is approached with concepts which want to illuminate the content of this continuum and make it the object of democratic access, thus opposing the strategies of dual privatisation.

Barbara Holland-Cunz in turn picks up this thread in her work on feminist democracy theory when she seeks a way between the claim for feminist transformation and the demands for participation in representative parliamentary democracy. The search will have to combine social critique, visionary proposals, and strategic reflection and as a consequence

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5 When David Held insists, in his proposal for a cosmopolitan democracy, on a „common structure of political action“ (Held 1995), then this is much closer to the normative procedural understanding outlined here than the ambivalent concept of „coherence“ .

orient itself analytically and normatively within democratic theory. Holland-Cunz marks the cornerstone of a feminist democracy theory with six characteristics: critical of dominance, participatory, directly democratic, discursive, relationship-oriented, and radical (Holland-Cunz 1998, p. 107ff.), which she then draws point by point into dialogue with the main tendencies of the debate on global governance and democracy. Her concept of participation is based on communal virtues, establishes a link between everyday life and national political institutions, and in turn strengthens the need for and the ability to achieve further participation. For Holland-Cunz, too, the discursive lies at the centre of the design. Here gender sensibility can be practised in speaking and listening; in the ongoing discussions at regional and national levels the necessary field of learning can be found for international discussion forums; and finally in democratic consensus-oriented exchanges regulations can be found for the necessary global decision-making processes.

In his work on a “deliberative supra-nationalism” as a model of “democratic governance beyond the nation-state” Rainer Schmalz-Bruns, who is dealt with at length by Holland-Cunz, recalls that the globalisation process not only reduces the quality of the democratic legitimacy but also weakens the ability of the nation-state to commit itself to its members. Also under this aspect, new ways are needed to form political communities. He combines this search with the hope that it would be possible to introduce goals and objectives into the new structures and procedures which were only inadequately accommodated in the received framework of the nation-state. Once again, considerable emphasis is placed on the “unifying features” of the discursive procedure which are able to combine the interests of the electorate with universal accountability. And, again, a key precondition is “that the demand for social equality must be understood as of equal origin to the idea of democratic formation of opinion “ (Schmalz-Bruns 1999, p. 211).

There are obvious objections. The institutionalisation of deliberative supranational procedure integrated in sectoral policies which Schmalz-Bruns outlines seems inappropriate for the lofty goals. The radical reformism drawing on Gramsci, on the other hand, for all the analytical validity regarding the political impact of hegemonial relations of production, is hardly able to present an alternative proposal. Finally, the objection raised for decades against the feminist reception of democracy theory based on discursive ethics can easily be applied, namely with the image of “a discursively self-creating inclusive, plural citizens’ community” (Holland-Cunz 1998, p. 172) to completely miss the lines of conflict structuring the society, which was identified not least through the critical analysis of feminist theorists. To this extent, one must certainly agree with Benhabib’s plea for “institutional imagination”. Nevertheless, it seems to us that the process-centred concepts of deliberative-democratic approaches are pointing in the right direction. They could possibly confront the various vacuous formal-democratic institutions with other, more authentic sources of democratic legitimisation and at the same time provide building blocks for an architecture of global governance.

The shift of the boundaries between public and private resulting from the neo-liberal project redefines social citizenship. The shift of the boundaries of dual privatisation in favour of the market, and the associated shift of work into private households limits the



space for political shaping and minimises the possibilities for the democratic structuring of personal life practices. While the burden on the national budget is visibly reduced, the increased burden falling on private households, and thus primarily on women, is not visible or accountable. Conversely, the limitation of the welfare state brings with it a redefinition of the privateness of women. This is delimited, made economically functional and severely restricted as a sphere of self-determination. The process clearly demonstrates the extent to which the social contract is based on a highly asymmetric gender contract.

While it dismantles and eclipses the social dimension of *citizenship status*, the globalisation process itself generates a multiplicity of local cultures, which calls into question the classic concept of citizenship, with its assumptions of a certain homogeneity. We can look back on a rich debate on citizenship, promoted in particular by feminist theorists stressing the relevance of difference. The necessity of bringing cultural and religious differences into the discussion and finding suitable forms for this in everyday life, may for its part contribute to practising dialogue and deliberation. In any case, the division of the components of citizenship which were previously thought of together more or less without reflection, namely “collective identity, privileges of political participation and social rights and entitlements” (Benhabib 2000, p. 88), leads to a re-determination of citizenship status in the globalisation context.

Just how a new social contract would have to order the relationship between the public and the private, what constitutes the genuinely public and what the private, cannot be categorically defined, but has to be politically negotiated in the framework of deliberative democracy.

A central feature of the liberal concept of global governance is that state actions are set in a new relationship to civil society through various forms of stakeholder participation. Whereas in the early stages of the debate civil society was credited with a high level of democratic virtues and capacity for communication and reflection, the view has recently become more sober. It cannot be denied altogether that the change of view is linked to the discursive success of the globalisation critics. Yet, they were actually the first to point out that they in no way see themselves as sources of legitimisation for a system which is increasingly restricting the space for political shaping (*Gestaltung*) (e.g. Brunnengräber et al. 2001).

In a concept which sees civil society as systematically linked along axes of dominance with the state apparatus, which in turn increasingly follows an agenda for securing competitiveness of location, it is not surprising to find elements of dominance in the civil society. Critics of capitalism have therefore repeatedly pointed out that “the inclusion of NGOs in regulated cooperation structures cannot be described *per se* as a gain”; at best it is a “form of compensation for democracy” (Görg/Hirsch 1998, p. 336). The investigation of specific network processes has also shown “a much smaller democratisation potential of global political networks” (Dingwerth 2003, p. 69) than is frequently assumed. From a feminist perspective, as was clearly shown in the reports presented to the Study Commission by Ilse Lenz (2002) and Uta Ruppert (2002), it cannot be assumed

either that participatory processes in themselves are suited to interrupt or exert leverage on androcentrically structured political processes. “The much-praised civil society is not *per se* friendly towards women, indeed the associative forms and discursive contexts may well be more discriminatory against women than parliamentary decision-making procedures” (Sauer 2001, p. 69). Network analyses have disclosed the extent to which supposedly horizontal networks are marked by male-organised patterns of action and structures and generate systematic constellations of inequality, marginalisation, and exclusion of women (Schunter-Kleemann 2003).

It is interesting to recall that Held’s “democratic political community” is not constituted *a priori* with a reference to human rights or citizenship, but should be regarded from a democracy theoretical perspective in varied, trans-boundary and trans-sectorial networks which overlap to form a suitable place for democratic ‘policy making’. The possibility of such a democratic community largely depends on the extent to which it is possible to shape the interior architecture of political communities in such a way that they accommodate and reaffirm one’s own social and political goals. Regarding the geographical dimension there is a general consensus about the desirability of broad political, economic and social decentralisation. The hope is that at local and regional levels, forms of self-determination of communal existence are most likely to be practised which are integrated in every-day life and which at the same time are instrumental in transcending it. At these levels it may also possibly be easier to intervene in a concrete fashion in the processes of hegemonially anchored injustice, and to bestow plausibility and co-power on efforts oriented towards the common good, the securing of the natural conditions of life as well as the individual and communal quality of life.

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