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Toward an Analysis of Global Citizenship

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For most people the everyday notion of citizenship is probably an official certificate for official purposes. No matter how essential political rights, like the universal right to vote, are in any state, one seldom hears about anybody seeking the citizenship of a particular country in order to vote there. A much more common reason is to get a permission to stay in that country or alternatively to get a passport with which it is possible to travel relatively freely. People are mobile and multiplicity of citizenship simply seems to restrict their mobility - at a time when capital, goods and information are passing borders more freely than ever.

This restrictive character of citizenship is concomitant with classical international law, which in many respects is also deeply undemocratic. James Crawford gives six examples: 1) international law assumes that the executive, usually the head of the state or the minister of foreign affairs, has comprehensive powers in international affairs; 2) national law, no matter how democratically established, is not an excuse for failure to comply with international obligations; 3) an individual has no autonomous or procedural rights in international law; 4) the principle of non-intervention protects non-democratic regimes against their own people; 5) the principle of self-determination constrains the possibilities to modify established boundaries irrespective of the wishes of the people; 6) international law recognises the general authority of a government over state as a continuing entity (Crawford, 1994: 8 - 10). For many authoritarian rulers, international law has provided juridical statehood although their internal legitimacy or even their ability to control the territory of the state has been highly questionable (Jackson & Rosberg, 1986).

Yet, international law is and has been changing toward a recognition of citizenship that carries substantial rights with respect to government power. First steps toward that direction were taken already after the Second World War - and the horrors of fascism - with the now fifty-years-old Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then all the major human rights treaties have spelled out the citizen's right to participate in the political life in their countries. The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights from the year 1966 provides in Article 25 that "every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity... to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors" (ICCPR, 1966). At the regional level similar provisions can be found in the European Convention on Human Rights from the year 1950, the American Convention on Human Rights from the year 1969, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights from the year 1981. According to Article 13 in the latter "every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law" (ACHPR, 1981).

The notion of democracy reflected in these treaties is not a simple majoritarian one, but contains the idea that every citizen, whether a member of a majority or a minority, has the same rights to participate in public life (Crawford, 1994: 4). In practice, however, rather than relating the citizens to government power, the purpose of these treaties has been limited to the rather modest task of protecting the citizens from the abuses of government power. The Cold War seriously constrained even the implementation of this principle, and the undemocratic character of many states did not prevent them

from signing the human rights treaties. Actual cases concerning the functioning of national political systems and in which reference has been made to international human rights treaties, are very recent (ibid.: 15), and a truly effective international law that is concerned with rules of national politics is still waiting to be born.

International law provides some of the most important parameters that have a bearing on the realisation of global citizenship. Global citizenship, however, cannot be only about globally agreed standards of national citizenship, but it also has to have a specific content vis-à-vis global processes affecting people's lives. To approach this content, the mere notion of human rights in international law is not enough. Even in the national context, citizenship cannot be restricted to the formal right to contribute to popular power, i.e. to democracy, but requires a meaningful political agenda, and on the part of the people, motivation, capacities and resources to participate. This connects citizenship to emancipation. Even if it is not always explicitly stated, human emancipation is in the core of the discussion on citizens' rights and possibilities to participate and enter the public sphere.

Historically human emancipation has manifested itself in various forms and in different occasions. One celebrated occasion was the French Revolution. Leaving aside the real character of that "revolution", its dating or its significance to modern history, as debated as they are, it is useful to recall the famous slogan of the French revolution: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité". It is through this slogan that the emancipatory content of global level citizenship can be investigated.

Liberté - the question of globalisation

Liberty at the global level can hardly be approached without paying attention to the complex phenomenon of globalisation. In a growing body of literature, globalisation, which refers to a wide area of human interaction crossing state borders, features as the core characteristic of the current age. Globalisation is about Internet, CNN, Michael Jackson, Coca Cola, global warming or ozone depletion - new possibilities, phenomena and challenges that make territoriality a less and less important organising principle for human life. The concept of globalisation is so widely used that it hardly makes sense to give any strict definition of it. Therefore it is perhaps more useful to focus on its implications. For our purposes, the implications of globalisation to political power are most relevant. One analysis was given by Michel Camdessus, the then Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to him, "the 21st century began in late December 1994, when the markets demonstrated, by the intensity of their reaction to a Mexican devaluation that failed because of the lack of credible policies to accompany it, just what globalization means."²² There is little reason to disagree with Camdessus. Even if the market is not the only force of globalisation, it demonstrates its political implications: a new kind of uncertainty and incapacity of the national governments to control the destinies of their nations.

This lack of national political control coincides with interpretations of globalisation as an unintentional and impersonal if not a natural phenomenon. It is understood as stemming from politically neutral forces, like the market, fuelled by technological development and increasing human skills to co-ordinate the processes of production, trade and consumption across vast areas in search of profits and accumulation of capital. Globalisation is associated with the spread of capitalist rationality and, by the same token, of Western culture. Even if globalisation would not "imply that every corner of the planet must become Westernized and capitalist", it implies "that every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West" (Waters, 1995: 3).

In the policies of the most powerful economic institutions with respect to the developing countries, World Bank and IMF, this option to “relate” has given way to a more straightforward “adjustment” to the global market in order to be “credible”. This intentional subordination of political decision-making to global processes is eloquently grasped by one observer as a “globalitarian” system (Ramonet, 1997). Just like a totalitarian system, the globalitarian system is based on one truth that makes all dissident thinking ridiculous, utopian or dangerous. Like a totalitarian system, it tolerates enormous human sacrifices for the sake of rationality beyond any questioning or political discussion. Virtually in all economies that have gone through structural adjustment, decisions have been made in secrecy without giving relevant information to the public to open up discussion about the content of the programme and possible alternatives to it. Even though the space of manoeuvring is somewhat larger in the rich countries, the same kind of choiceless agenda is characteristic also in their economic policies.

A political system of one truth is counter-productive to political liberty in spite of the absence of direct and violent repression of its critics. Paradoxically at the height of the Cold War, political liberty was in some respects and at least potentially more prevailing than today. Even in the context of ideological persecution of dissidents and aggressive struggle over allies by both blocks of the Cold War, it was possible to be political and raise discussion about alternative goals and strategies. With disappearing ideological conflicts, the world is now riddled almost solely with economic hierarchies and identity-related antagonism.

Because there can be no winners without losers in the processes of profit-making, globalisation creates structures and cleavages by processes of economic inclusion and exclusion. Those included must be increasingly competitive. Those excluded must look for other sources of human dignity outside or antithetical to globalisation, Western culture and - to put it simply - money. This is the political economy of new fundamentalism, where static identities replace politics and groups defining themselves according to given ethnic or religious significations tend to enter the public arena with stakes comprising not only their opinions or economic interests but their very existence. These groups claim a special way of being, knowing and thinking which only their members can have. They allow hardly any possibility for the claims of other people, especially if it competes with their own, to be taken seriously except in oppositionality. Thus the era of globalisation is also an era of intense identity-based political violence.

Political liberty means tolerance and an ability to raise explicit questions concerning power and decision-making affecting one’s life. Perhaps more than anything else, this requires an ability to question one’s own identity and its relation to the actual structures of power. If people can recognise their identities through the hierarchies of power, they are also conscious of the dynamic base of those structures and of the fact that these identities - or codes and significations given to them - can be changed. “Being a woman”, “being African”, “being unemployed” becomes a political force and a means for emancipation at the moment when people can strategically question the use of those identities as given codes for hierarchical structures by giving new significations to them. The mere experience of seeing one’s own identity as an expression of social relations, a strategic outcome of contradictions and struggle is concomitant to tolerance towards others and their claims. This is also the essence of “cultural citizenship” which claims the right to be different but yet to contribute to democratic participation (Delgado-Moriera, 1997: 4). Besides, the mere fact of seeing the political identities as dynamic makes them also multiple and overlapping. Then there is always a possibility to find something which is shared and common.

The challenge posed by globalisation to political liberty is thus twofold. It concerns the ability of people firstly to conceptualise and understand the structures of power affecting their lives, and secondly to relate their personal or collective struggles for emancipation to these structures. The more globalisation appears impersonal, the more difficult these options are. People easily become politically disinterested or alternatively turn to given identities which mainly celebrate themselves and which, in spite of their vocal nature, are not about emancipation.

Egalité - the question of governance

Globalisation, of course, is no more impersonal than any human processes are, although it might well be that its current acceleration is beyond the direct control or intentions of any authorities. It is clear that globalisation results from explicit political choices starting from the deregulation of financial markets in the leading industrialised countries. Whatever the list of steps taken toward a global system and attempts to control these processes, there is hardly any doubt about the dominance of the industrialised countries. This brings us to the question of equality and world governance.

In many respects the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay round negotiations between 1986 and 1994, which led to the emergence of the World Trade Organization (WTO), provide an example of global level power relations and their development. At first, the negotiations proceeded slowly due to the opposition of developing countries, whose collective action at the ideological level still reflected the goal of the New International Economic Order. Led by India and Brazil the developing countries argued, for instance, that they were not sufficiently developed to negotiate about services on an equal basis with the industrialised countries. In 1991, the mood changed, however. Developing countries were suddenly enthusiastic supporters of the Uruguay Round agenda. The decisive factor in this turnabout was the macroeconomic change and economic reform in developing countries pushed by the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programmes (Winham, 1997). Structural adjustment was not only concomitant with the goals of the Uruguay Round agreements but it also meant that the alternative - being left outside the agreements - seemed very dangerous. The threat was that the opening up of these economies to foreign competition would not be accompanied by new flows of direct foreign investments so much aspired by structural adjustment programmes.

While the industrialised world was able to act collectively in many issues protecting their specific interests, like those concerning intellectual property rights or emphasis on environmental and labour standards - affordable only to them - toward the end of the negotiations, developing countries lost their common stance and every country largely acted on its own. In spite of WTO, the most important collective concern of the developing countries, their access to agricultural markets in the industrial countries, still remains highly unfair. Concerning intellectual property rights, one can only imagine the anxiety that patented agricultural products can cause in developing countries. Already now cultivation processes are policed, since peasants, contrary to thousands of years old traditions, are prohibited to use the seeds of patented crops they are harvesting from their own fields.

The lack of joint action by the developing countries at the end of the GATT negotiations is part of a more general phenomenon. Since the end of the Cold War, the developing countries have gradually lost their ability to act collectively through the Group of

77 or the Non-Aligned Movement, for instance. This is partly due to the increasing heterogeneity of these countries, which means diverse interests among them; and partly to the fact that the actual dominance of the industrialised countries has grown. The industrialised countries are still very much acting together through OECD, NATO or EU (Raghavan, 1996). Moreover they can use disproportionate power through international bodies that are not regarded political at all - most notably transnational corporations (TNCs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs). A rough estimate suggests that the 300 largest TNCs, which are based predominantly in Western Europe, North America, and Japan, own or control at least one quarter of the entire world's productive assets (The Economist, March 27, 1993). While TNCs are only indirectly tied to national governments, which are merely using their powers in the international arena in order to facilitate the operations of those TNCs that have headquarters inside their borders, the IFIs are implementing a one dollar - one vote principle. Both of them represent global dominance that is deeply undemocratic; firstly because it is not open for public scrutiny even in the industrialised countries themselves, and secondly because it is highly discriminating against the governments of developing countries and thus against the clear majority of the world population.

David Held is one of the writers who have addressed in detail the issue of equal representation of people in the international arena and extension of the boundaries of democracy as a system of accountability both in the "functional" international bodies and in international organisations. As the world consists of multiple and overlapping networks of power, so also law-making and law enforcement could be developed at a variety of locations and levels alongside with regional and international courts to monitor and check political authority (Held, 1992: 36). In addition to an authoritative assembly of all democratic states and societies (re-formed United Nations), Held is arguing for the creation of regional parliaments for Africa, Europe, Latin America etc. that would become legitimate independent sources of regional and international law (ibid.: 34; Held, 1995: 105). Creation of such bodies to the regional level - which for instance in the case of the European Parliament is still far from satisfactory - would make the global system of representation sensitive to the very real regional specificities and differences in the world. Societies in different situations need different policies and prioritisation, a fact that seems to have been incomprehensible to international bodies like the World Bank. In this sense regional level democracy could be one way of enhancing the collective voice of developing countries, which is necessary for them to promote their interests in the international arena.

The cosmopolitan model of democracy presented by Held is further elaborated by Daniele Archibugi with respect to the role of the United Nations. He is arguing that although the contemporary United Nations is very far from being able to play the role in global governance for which it was created, it is neither realistic nor useful to imagine a more democratic global governance without assigning a principal role to the United Nations. According to him, this requires reforms along three basic lines: the creation of Peoples' Assembly, which would represent rather the citizens than their governments; strengthening of world juridical powers; and modification of the executive powers, i.e. the Security Council (Archibugi, 1995: 123).

Richard Falk is arguing for a much more far-reaching and people-oriented approach to avoid development that according to him could lead only to a heavy, co-ordinated network of governmental institutions, including the centralisation of control over war-making and police functions. The danger is the emergence of mechanical world citizenship serving the interests of globalising elites. Therefore Falk is calling for human governance, which could counter the pressure of the global market forces and a greater degree of co-ordination to facilitate economic processes. The success of human

governance would not mean electronically managed financial markets, but it would be measured by the decline of poverty, violence and pollution and by increasing adherence to human rights and constitutional practices, especially in relation to vulnerable segments of society. (Falk, 1995: 7, 89.) Human governance thus concerns collective and transnational responsibility with regard to human distress, which leads us to the notion of fraternité in the realisation of global citizenship.

Fraternité - the question of human distress

While the notions of liberty and equality feature both in the academic and in the international political discussion on the promotion of democracy and human rights all over the world, the third notion of the French slogan has not received so much attention. However fraternité, the correct translation of which in this contemporary era of gender consciousness is solidarity, is no less important to the idea of emancipation than the notions of liberty and equality. Solidarity is an inherently political concept referring to an interdependency between equals. It should be distinguished from charity, purely moral or religious obligations of the privileged to give alms to the have-nots. The essence of solidarity is not aid to those in distress and a duty toward the others, but feeling of togetherness and shared security. In the final analysis, it is this belonging that creates a political community of a large number of people who personally can never know each other or even the living conditions of each other. Without this kind of belonging and its conscious institutionalisation, the pursuit of individual liberty and equality become too consuming to be emancipatory and too selfish to contribute to the well-being of the whole society. If the notions of liberty and equality point to the self, solidarity points to the social dimension of human emancipation.

Major trends in global development open up enormous opportunities for global solidarity to protect and expand human dignity and decent life all over the world. End of the Cold War ideological confrontations, spread of liberal democracy, an economy worth \$25 trillion, growing knowledge on the prevention and cure of fatal diseases and new communication technology are just examples providing new capacities and skills which could be mobilised towards global well-being. The reality, however, is very different. Today one quarter of the world's people live in severe poverty. The share of the poorest 20 per cent of the people in global income is about one per cent and continues to shrink. In 1960, the income of the richest 20 per cent of the people was about 30 times that of the poorest 20 per cent, now it is 80 times as high. Africa is witnessing the highest proportion and the fastest growth of human poverty. Children, women, the aged and disabled are especially vulnerable in poverty. According to estimates by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), eradicating poverty and the human suffering associated with it from the world would not cost more than about one per cent of global income and less than three per cent of the national income in all but the poorest countries. (UNDP, 1997: 2, 3, 9, 12.)

But the global flows of development aid have declined simultaneously with the growing gap between the rich and poor countries. In 1995, the OECD countries were giving aid worth 0.26 per cent of their GNP, while the same figure ten years before was 0.35 (OECD, 1996: column 4). Still rich countries cannot escape their global responsibility. A case in point is the debt burden of the developing countries. The debt of the 41 highly indebted developing countries now totals \$215 billion. Quick and indiscriminating debt relief is a necessity for them to invest in human development in order to build up economies that could compete in the global market. Although the first steps have been taken to this direction, much more comprehensive initiatives are needed.

In addition to poverty, much distress in the world is caused by political violence, which has saturated many transitions to liberal democracies as well in the East as in the South. Most alarming is the increasing number and depth of humanitarian emergencies. New crises are emerging while old ones are not resolved. Raimo Väyrynen has defined humanitarian emergency as a “profound social crisis in which a large number of people die and suffer from war, disease, hunger, and displacement owing to man-made and natural disasters, while others may benefit from it”. By utilising international statistical data he singled out 25 such humanitarian crises in 1993-95 (Väyrynen, 1996: 19). Half of them were “complex humanitarian crises” where violence and poverty reinforced each other, and ten of these complex cases were located in Africa.

A closer look at these humanitarian emergencies reveals that they are no accidents, but result from deliberate use of coercion by the powerful groups seeking material and political gains. Protracted crises, which are continuing for years in spite of their enormous material and human costs, are typically characterised by economic and political “order” in which private gains of the elites can be so high that they have no real incentives to peaceful resolution. It might well be that only external intervention can alter the crisis (Väyrynen, 1997: 5).

The end of the Cold War raised expectations that the ideological division of the world and self-interested involvement of superpowers would be replaced by new globalist thinking and truly international actors intervening in such humanitarian emergencies. The 1992 United Nations Security Council sponsored military action in Somalia illustrates both the new expectations and the disillusionment of this new era. The operation, whose purpose was to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian relief aid to a country where 1.5 million people were estimated to be threatened with starvation, was from the beginning dominated by the United States. As Peter Schraeder has noted, President Bush’s decision to send over 20,000 combat troops to Somalia - as such the largest American direct military undertaking in Africa so far - was motivated rather by presidential politics than any sudden United States’ government interest in Somalia. (Schraeder, 1994: 12 - 25.) More than anything else it was Bush’s interest to be remembered as a “decisive leader” when the media delivered reports on starving children and raised public awareness of the situation in Somalia, which explains the hastily prepared operation.

Almost immediately after their landing, the American forces became involved in the clan-fighting in the country: first by defending themselves, then by efforts to isolate General Mohamed Farah Aidid’s forces and finally even by attacks against that faction of the war. Less than a year after the sending of the troops, killings of American soldiers in Mogadishu raised a firestorm of criticism in the United States and led President Clinton to withdraw all American soldiers. The long-term implications of the whole Somalia experience became evident half a year later, when Clinton introduced a new United States policy toward any United Nations Security Council sponsored military operations. According to the new principles, the support of the United States for any such operations in cases of a threat to international security and urgent need for relief aid after widespread violence and interruption of democracy or a gross violation of human rights depends on 1) clear objectives, 2) the availability of sufficient money and troops, 3) a mandate appropriate to the mission, 4) a realistic exit strategy and 5) consent of the parties before the force is deployed. This is a far cry from globalist thinking and new kind of multilateral responsibility. (Schraeder, 1995: 59.)

In many respects the case of Somalia reveals a lot of the actual process that can determine the character of international actions but also prevent the emergence of real global solidarity in cases of humanitarian crises. First of all it shows that the media

plays an important role in the agenda setting by creating both awareness and frustration concerning far away situations. After the withdrawal of the United Nations from Somalia, the Western public has been left with an assumption that peace has returned to Somalia. The Somalia case also shows that when the decisive action is taken by national rather than international or regional actors - this time by the United States - public awareness becomes an issue of domestic politics of that nation. This relates the decision making to the actual crisis and its development only indirectly. Taking into consideration the enormously complex nature of humanitarian emergencies, it is no wonder that operations planned and directed in far away places with vested domestic interests end up to be disastrous.

In the case of Rwanda, the Clinton administration not only refused to provide troops requested by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, but also instructed administration spokespersons to avoid labelling the conflict as genocide apparently in order to keep down the public awareness of the distress in Rwanda but also to avoid the international legal obligation to intervene in case of genocide (Jehl, 1994). The plain reality seems to be that without the support of the United States, the United Nations reactions to humanitarian emergencies have become cautious if not indifferent. The lack of sufficient resources and political will have undermined United Nations' efforts also in other conflicts. It has even been suggested that the United Nations is currently motivated rather by avoidance of potential failures than concern about the suffering of the victims of humanitarian emergencies (see Barnett, 1996).

Emerging global agenda

The above analysis points to the limits of global citizenship in the contemporary world. However, while these limits are very real and while the emergence of global citizenship cannot be celebrated yet, the mere possibility to give relevant content to the notion and to imagine it as an emancipatory project is significant. The very same processes that limit the realisation of global citizenship can also inspire transnational democratic movements to fight against globalitarianism as well as fundamentalism. Globalisation itself facilitates grass-roots mobilisation of people across state borders (see Barber, 1995). Furthermore, as argued by James Rosenau, the effects of globalisation at the level of citizens can increase their analytical skills and capacities to make the political authority all over the world more accountable (Rosenau, 1992: 283).

Realisation of global citizenship is both a realistic and necessary step in order to make human civilisation possible also in the future. The global reality is already there, although the creation of political institutions, i.e. a global polis through which humankind could take full responsibility of its activities, is yet to be born. Still global citizenship should be distinguished from utopian thinking about the abolition of states and war-making. Richard Falk for instance has argued that displacing the state as a central actor in world politics would imply a more peaceful and demilitarised world (Falk, 1995). Of course, it might be that a global polis could be a step toward the Kantian idea of perpetual peace, but it is also true that it would not abolish the many material and cultural differences prevailing between societies, nations and regions. While global citizenship would mean political incorporation of the masses, especially the poor of the developing countries, to the global system of political power, as such it would not upset the unequal distribution of economic wealth. Therefore there is probably no way of avoiding the possible confrontations and the violence, whether structural or open, in them.

What institutionalisation of global citizenship could provide, however, is a framework

to agree on some basic priorities and to prevent the kind of economic polarisation and environmental degradation that is threatening global security today. The mere fact that the voice of every person, whether living in the South or in the North, belonging to a minority or majority, would count, would mean at least a minimum level of accountability of the global governance. While it would not prevent interest or identity based conflicts, it could prevent and mitigate conflicts that are emerging from sheer marginalisation of large segments of the world population. By opening up the governance of world politics for public scrutiny, it could also contribute to the creation of a global public sphere, which as a neutral arena could facilitate peaceful conflict resolution. In this sense it can be argued that both violence and the difficulty to realise democracy in the modern world largely result from the failure of the contemporary political units, i.e. the states, to integrate to each other (Archibugi, 1995: 134).

A key for the emergence of such a polis is a global consensus on the proper role of state/public power at the national, regional and global level and a minimum level consensus on the global priorities. This kind of consensus-building has already started. Different actors at different levels are becoming more aware of our shared destiny and are attempting to agree upon the most important issues in the 21st century. One proof of this is the “generational” development of the notion of human rights.

The first generation of human rights include those of civil and political nature discussed in the beginning of this article. The second generation extended rights to the economic and social realms, which is recognised already in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1966 Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. The third generation of human rights include those of a collective character - most notably the right of development formulated by a Senegalese lawyer Keba M’bay and recognised by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1977 (Mamdani, 1992: 315). While it is true that especially the second and third generation of rights are still aspirational statements of rhetorical value (Falk, 1995: 187), the mere fact that they are affirmed contributes to the emergence of global agenda. This is because only norms that approach universality can form the basis for it. So far the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 provides the most “global” affirmation of these rights since as many as 172 states participated in the conference, which underlined the universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated character of all human rights.

In addition to Vienna, also other world conferences under the auspices of the United Nations during the 1990’s show a trend that is historical both in its substance and in its form. These conferences have ranged from Children in New York in 1990 to Environment in Rio in 1992, from Population in Cairo and Women in Beijing in 1994 to Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 and Human Settlement in Istanbul and Food in Rome in 1996. Although these conferences have had their own themes and most of them have been continuations and follow-ups of conferences held in previous decades - World Summit for Children and World Summit for Social development being the only new initiatives - they also have common features which make it appropriate to speak about them as one phenomenon. (UN, 1997a.)

First of all, and in connection with the overall change in international relations, the conferences have been able to get a high profile, because they were attended by many heads of state who could focus public attention on issues that were overshadowed during the Cold War. A second specificity has been a new kind of attention to individuals, to their behaviour and to the importance of their participation. This is related to a concern that the top-down approach to global problems should be countered by grass-roots input from the beginning.

The third specificity in all of these summits has been an emphasis on development and its conceptualisation according to human needs. While the first United Nations conference on environment, which was held in Stockholm in 1972, concentrated solely on the environment, the Rio Earth Summit proposed a strong connection between development and environment. Also problems concerning human rights, population, women, food, and poverty have been approached above all as hindrances of human development. This means that the conferences have also been overlapping and represent a continuum in a global search for an appropriate notion of sustainable and human development. This can be regarded as empowering on the part of the developing countries, which in all these conferences have emphasised the importance of the right for development.

Although the declarations adopted by the conferences in many respects show that the consensus principle, in terms of the lowest common denominator, tends to favour conservatism, the conferences have also been able to discuss difficult issues much more openly than before. The Cairo and Beijing conferences, for instance, were able to take culturally sensitive issues like abortion or female genital mutilation on their agenda, which was impossible during the conferences on women and population in the previous decades. The Cairo and Beijing conferences introduced the concepts of reproductive health and reproductive rights. For the first time, women's right to control over and decide on matters related to their sexuality was mentioned as a human right, and rape during an armed conflict was defined a war crime.

Together the programmes and declarations of the conferences form the global agenda which includes the eradication of poverty, the fulfilment of the basic needs of all people and the protection of all human rights. The declarations require that governments apply active social and environmental policies and that they promote and protect rights and democratic institutions. These requirements, however, are not legally binding, but only moral and political by nature. In this sense, the character of the world conferences has been only normative. Still one of the purposes of the conferences has been to facilitate international law on common concerns. In the case of the Earth Summit in Rio, these include for instance conventions on climate change, biological diversity and combating desertification. But in the case of Rio, as well as with the other world conferences, the gap between the commitments made and their fulfilment tends to be big.

A major achievement of the conferences, however, has been in opening space for a global civil society. In Rio, about 60,000 people participated in the Global Forum that was arranged for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at the same time with the Earth Summit. In Copenhagen, a similar forum was attended by 2,800 NGOs. The conferences have created opportunities for NGO co-operation, networking and dialogue at the international level. In many countries the conferences have brought governments and civil society representatives into close dialogue and co-operation through the creation of national planning committees. As stated in the secretary-general's report on reform at the United Nations, "[i]t would now be difficult to imagine organising a global event and formulating multilateral agreements and declarations without the active participation of NGOs" (UN, 1997: paragraph 213).

Although a kind of global civil society in the form of international NGOs has been part of the landscape of world politics during the whole century, it can be argued that since the end of the Cold War, its visibility and influence has been growing enormously. The importance of the creation of global civil society for global citizenship and democratisation can hardly be exaggerated. To become a global affair, democracy requires global civil society (see Held, 1992: 33, 34).

Conclusions

The development of international law suggests a shifting of emphasis from the universality of state sovereignty to standards of citizenship, i.e. human rights. Rights, however, have to be integrated to human emancipation, which requires an analysis going beyond legal conventions. A closer look at the forces of economic globalisation, hierarchical power structures in the world governance, and lack of political will to eradicate increasing human poverty and react determinedly in cases of human emergencies show the actual limits of global citizenship and general tendencies that seem to limit it even further.

Still it is possible to speak about a simultaneous search for a global consensus on norms and priorities, that could give immediate bases to the extension of democracy and rights beyond the borders of nation states. Thus the need for a new analysis of politics and citizenship that would take into account the processes and structures of the global system and belonging, the increasing pressure toward democratisation included. It is this pressure which in many respects is the historical and global trend of the contemporary world. Even if not always clear, even if taking some steps backwards, this trend has to be conceptualised and reflected in detail in order to retain the meaning of democracy and citizenship also in the future.

Although this historical trend is anything but automatic and vitally dependent on people's struggle, it is nevertheless the context within which the future of certain modes of behaviour and certain ways of using power can be judged. To say that "[t]his is the age of human rights" (Annan, 1997: 16) is not an empty slogan, but it means that authoritarian and repressive governments belong to the past - whether they realise it or not.

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Footnotes

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² Camdessus, Michel “The G-7 in 1996: What is at stake”, Address at an international colloquium in Lyon, France June 24, 1996 (mimeo from IMF, Washington DC), quoted in Raghavan, 1996:5.