Chapter 16

Towards a Planetary Polity

The formation of global identity and state structures

Andreas Bummel

Abstract This article looks into the interconnection between the development of a global identity and a planetary polity from a long-term view. It is argued that global political integration is facing special conceptual challenges compared to the historic dynamics of social evolution. The article explores obstacles and catalysts for the formation of a world state. Critical global challenges put notions of national sovereignty into question. Images of Earth from space represent a new cosmic perspective. Questions touched upon include what defines a nation and its people? How is individual and collective identity constituted? On what principles would a global polity need to be based on from a planetary view?

1 Introduction

The social evolution of the human species can be summarized as a continual coming together and breaking apart of social units. Oscillating between cooperation and rivalry they competed since the dawn of history for resources and dominance. Within those units, rules evolved to make living together as free of conflict as possible, albeit hand in hand with the formation of hierarchical social strata and a ruling class at the top that controlled the use of force and determined the distribution of resources to a large degree. The predominant attitude towards outside units was one of mistrust and competition. In the course of population growth, technological progress and productivity gains, these units tended to become ever larger in terms of population numbers and territorial reach and their interconnections ever closer.

In the long run, the total number of autonomous units has been decreasing. Around 1500 BCE, with an estimated world population of 50 million, there were perhaps 600,000 such units (Carneiro, 2004). Today the world population is estimated to have reached 7.8 billion and there are around 200 states and territories. At first glance, the continued existence of micro-states and the increase in the total number of states in the second half of the 20th century may seem to

Andreas Bummel
Democracy Without Borders
e-mail: bummel@democracywithoutborders.org

contradict a trend of integration in recent times.[1] Nonetheless, all these units are embedded in a complex web of interdependence in all areas that blurs their boundaries. They rely on transborder interaction and systems to sustain their functioning and are under constant influence of externalities outside their control, global carbon emissions and the impact of global warming being important examples.[2] A multitude of other entities has become more and more important in this process, for instance intergovernmental and supranational organizations at different levels and multinational corporations, in particular in the financial sector.

Today's nation-states thus do not represent a useful yardstick to measure the number of autonomous units. Instead, they should be recognized as dynamic elements in an ongoing process of global state formation that Elias (2000) traced back to feudal times.[3] By now, we are dealing with the emergence of one world system that is integrating with different speeds in different areas. Arguably, the number of autonomous units in the world has reached zero. Since there is no planetary polity either, for Zhao (2019) the world thus resembles a failed state. The fact that the global legal and political order is still based on separate states that mutually recognize each other's nominal sovereignty is a major source of tension and dysfunction. There is an ever more critical scale mismatch between global public goods that need to be managed and the limited institutions available to do so. This is in conflict with a cultural recognition of interdependence which is best symbolized by a cosmic perspective and a sense of global citizenship. This situation can be interpreted as a manifestation of a cultural lag as described by Ogburn (1957). According to this theory, every society requires time to implement changes needed to deal with new technologies, so there is a lag between technological advancement and social adaptation. This lag, though, may entail major risks and negative impacts due to lack of effective mitigation or regulation.[4] At the global scale, there seem to be particular dynamics at play that exacerbate this issue.

2 Force is no option

First of all, the emergence of larger social units historically often was achieved by one unit subjugating others. However, the socio-political dynamic of development fortunately has been undergoing a fundamental change which increasingly excludes the use of force. In general terms, Pinker (2011) has gathered interesting data on the decline of violence over long time spans. Spencer (1897) already pointed out that wars of conquest had outlived their day as a means of bringing about lasting integration as this was incompatible with the human urge for emancipation. Sooner or later, such units fall apart "when the coercive power which holds them together fails" and even if they could be held together, "would not form harmoniously-working wholes" (p. 664). According to Welzel (2013) there is a universal human desire for an existence

---

[1] Over 100 states have a population size of less than 10 million each, jointly representing less than five percent of the world's total. This includes around 40 micro-states with a combined population size of only about 12 million or 0.2 percent of the total.

[2] In the area of global goods, such as the atmosphere or the oceans, the 'tragedy of the commons' remains an appropriate conceptual framework that explains overuse, cf. (Leinen and Bummel 2018, p. 135ff.).

[3] This process of global state formation is a main theme in Leinen and Bummel (2018).

[4] The lack of adjustment to the danger of nuclear arms was one of the examples mentioned by Ogburn (1957, p. 174).

free from domination, and emancipative values continue to gather momentum from a long-term perspective.

Nevertheless, wars of conquest continued to be pursued. Territorial conflicts played a significant role in the outbreak of the First World War, and the Second World War was conducted by Nazi Germany as a war of annihilation and conquest. As Graber (2006) noted, the outcome of both these wars was an increase, not a decrease, in the total number of states. The prohibition against the use of force in Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter documents the fact that in international law the use of force is no longer acceptable between states even if in reality geopolitical tensions and the threat of violence persist.[5] Still, the nuclear armament at the disposal of some states means that the consolidation of the system of states into a single worldwide unit by the exercise or threat of military force by a hegemonic power is impossible in practical terms. A nuclear Third World War would destroy modern global civilization. This is not to say that a nuclear war scenario can be excluded. A conflict can spiral out of control or it might be triggered otherwise intentionally or by accident. This is one of the major risks of our time. The process of global state formation, however, cannot be driven by force.

The example of European integration shows that there is another option. In this case, states gradually, peacefully and voluntarily have been building a joint new higher-level unit that takes over some of their powers. Nonetheless, it should not be ignored that historically this process was to no small part driven by the recognition of a common external threat posed by the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. At the time, the emergence of the European communities was strongly supported by the United States for this reason. At the global scale, no such external threat exists.

3 There is no "Them"

The relevance of external units in the consolidation of other units at a higher level of integration plays a key role in patterns described for human social evolution. This is the case in a general "growth sequence" suggested by Adams (1975) that consists of three stages named identity, coordination and centralization.

First, a number of individuals or other preexisting units identify each other as having similarities in some way. The key for this identity formation according to Adams fundamentally is a binary differentiation of some set of "we" from some set of "other" (p. 210). Thus, there usually is a separate external unit or group of some kind to distinguish from.

It should be noted that those distinctions can be completely socially constructed.[6] At a more fundamental level, anthropologists have been exploring a "universal pattern" common to all cultures (Wissler 1923, ch. 5), stating that cultural differences in behaviour and outlook are almost entirely a product of habit formation and learning at a mass scale (Murdock 1969, ch. 7). They identified the "psychic unity of humankind" (Bastian 1900, p. 10; Köpping 2005, p. 175) according to which the psychological equipment of all people is basically alike. Nonetheless, in a study on human universals, Brown (1991, p. 6) remarked that even many

---

[5] Global military expenditure rose to US$ 1917 billion in 2019 or 2.2 percent of global GDP (SIPRI, 2020).
[6] On the social construction of race, for instance, see Smedley and Smedley (2005).

anthropologists deny similarities shared by all humans "because *everybody* likes to hear that 'they' are different from 'us'" (emphasis in the original).

Back to Adams, in the second stage, once the component parts of the new "we" start collaborating, a so-called coordinated unit emerges. The crucial feature of this pattern outlined by Adams lies in the circumstance that the centralization of one unit, that goes along with the creation of hierarchies, usually occurs as part of the coordination of that unit with other units. This means that coordination of a unit with other units at the next level is a precondition for centralization of this unit at the previous one. In other words, if there are no units to coordinate with at a next level, centralization is unlikely to occur. As Adams points out, a "unit centralizes as a response to external pressure, and in human societies the only continuing pressure is that exerted by other societies. This pressure from other societies demands external coordination, at the same time that it attempts internal centralization" (Adams, 1975, p. 211).

Based on this model it could be concluded that at the level of the entire human species, at the maximal level of social organization, the emergence of a centralized integrated unit is impossible because there are no known external units beyond humanity to coordinate with which would put a process of centralization in motion. Indeed, according to Adams, humanity for this reason "can never be politically unified" and the top structurally will always "remain multiple" (p. 304). This issue was touched on by Ronald Reagan (1987) when the US President noted that "some alien threat from outside this world" may be needed for humanity to overcome its internal antagonisms and recognize its common bonds. Achieving a collective identity and unit centralization at the global scale despite the absence of the "other" seems to represent a unique challenge in human social evolution.

4 The formation of a global collective identity

At the level of individual identity formation, it is widely accepted that this crucially depends on "dialogical relations with others" as Taylor put it (1994, p. 34). Whether an external "other" is an absolute necessity for the formation of group identity and thus for a dynamic of centralization to come into motion at the level of humanity as a whole, however, has been contested. Why should cultural learning and adjustment not be possible at this level, too?

It has been argued that what may be true for individual identity formation does not necessarily apply equally to collective identity formation (Abizadeh 2005). Unlike an individual, a collective can constitute itself through recognition by its individual component parts. Recognition by and relations with another external unit empirically may be the usual case but in theory this does not constitute an absolute precondition. In terms of a world state the whole and the component parts would have their own subjectivities that are not identical and would constrain each other's behaviour (Wendt 2003). An internal differentiation of this kind would allow each part "to recognize the Other, while incorporating that Other within its own definition of Self" (ibid., p. 527). Conceptually, no external unit would be needed.

In addition, for territorial states a spatial boundary is a fundamental element that divides between a set of "us" and "them". By definition, a spatial "other" would not be available to facilitate the formation of a world state. The absence of spatial differentiation functionally could be substituted by a temporal self-differentiation between past and present identities (Wendt 2003; Abizadeh 2005). As Wendt explains, Germany, for instance, draws part of its identity today

from the demarcation separating it from the Nazi regime and its crimes. A determination to build an emancipative global order that no longer tolerates and enables war, genocide, ecocide, oppression, racism and misery as in the past thus may be a crucial formative element of a collective global identity. In this process, in some way humanity's own collective shadow self may represent the "other".

Culturally, the experience of seeing the planet as an integral fragile entity, from the outside, is one of epochal significance for the emergence of a global identity. The latter could be defined as a notion of belonging to the whole world that goes along with a feeling of solidarity with all humankind and of responsibility for all life on the planet. For this reason, images of the Earth from space are among the most influential and important photographs ever taken.[7] TV coverage of the Moon landing in 1969 was followed by hundreds of millions of people, who were confronted with an outside perspective on the planet. The picture of the Earth in its totality is without question *the* symbol of our age and a rising alarm over climate change, animal extinction, biodiversity loss and other anthropogenic environmental harm. Satellite images from Earth and footage from the International Space Station by now are commonplace and contribute among a broader population to what White (2014) called an "Overview Effect".

The promotion of global citizenship education by UNESCO, which was later taken up by the UN as part of the Agenda 2030[8], shows that there is a serious effort to embed civic learning on global issues and from a global perspective in curricula across the world. No doubt this has the potential to strongly contribute to the emergence of a global identity. This includes the possibility of developing a common narrative, as the new field of Big History attempts to do (cf. Leinen and Bummel 2018, pp. 359ff.).

5 State formation and global citizenship

The development of institutions and the emergence of identity are reciprocal processes. In the process of state formation this is well documented. Historical research recognizes more and more that the creation of nation-states was not necessarily a result of bottom-up mass mobilization as popularized myths would have it, but rather of intentional projects driven by elites from the top (Osterhammel 2003). The creation of state institutions often was the beginning and most important instrument in the construction of national identities which previously as such did not exist.

The homogenous "nation-state" is more fiction than reality. Most of the world's states are unquestionably multicultural and have large minorities. Modern societies are increasingly complex and diverse. Extensive DNA research confirms that populations had been "moving and mixing" all the time. The idea that present-day people directly descend in some way from people who always lived in the same area is "wrong almost everywhere" (Gabbatis 2018; Mathieson et al. 2018). To call nationality and nationalism "cultural artefacts", as Anderson (1991) did, is very appropriate.

---

[7] E.g., 'Earthrise' (Apollo 8, 24 Dec. 1968) and 'Blue Marble' (Apollo 17, 7 Dec. 1972).
[8] Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and Indicator 12.8.1.

France and Great Britain are examples used to illustrate that it was primarily the state which created a symbolic framework supporting the development of a strong national identity (Zürn and Walter-Drop 2011, p. 265). Ethnic, linguistic or religious criteria as common bonds were secondary at early points in the process (Hobsbawn 1992, p. 20). Over time, programmes of education were put together to spread a national narrative and a national language that initially was usually only spoken by a minority among the population. Even in the Third Republic in 1863, French was still a foreign language for half the citizens (Weber 1976, p. 70).

From this perspective, the successive creation of a world state could be pursued as an elite-driven project that does not necessarily rely on a predominant global identity among the world population at first, and the vast diversity of human civilization would be no hindrance either as existing heterogeneous nation-states and the history of their formation suggests. However, a strong will on the part of a transnational elite would then be required. At this point there are no signs that such a will exists. Quite the contrary, a majority of the elites seems to regard the idea of a global authority not only as something difficult to bring about but as something that itself is not desirable (cf. Leinen and Bummel 2018, p. 306ff). Arguably, a world system divided into 200 nominally sovereign units that can be played against each other provide transnational corporations and their owners massive leeway compared with a world government that potentially can establish and enforce universal rules if need be, for instance in the field of taxation. This certainly does not preclude the possibility that individuals who belong to the elite, for instance due to their net worth, develop a planetary perspective and decide to support efforts of global political integration. At some point this may become a rational choice from a self-interest perspective, too, as potential limitations imposed by a world government may be preferable to an eventual global system breakdown and its consequences. In any case, institutional inertia and a tendency towards self-preservation for its own sake at the level of national governments should not be underestimated. To a large extent it still holds true what Reves (1946, p. 259) pointed out long ago: "The representatives of the sovereign nation-states are incapable of acting and thinking otherwise than according to their nation-centric conceptions."

On the other hand, many national constitutions permit the transfer of sovereign rights to international organizations so this possibility was often anticipated by their creators and may be useful in the future.[9] In fact, membership in the UN means to accept the binding nature under international law of decisions taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which to a degree already represents a transfer of sovereignty that states have accepted. In this context, the UN and its symbolism can play a key role in global identity formation (Fromm 2010, pp. 87ff.). Global elections to a parliamentary body at the UN would be a monumental milestone in this regard. For the first time, all people would be bound together as global citizens in selecting joint planetary representatives.

At this point it should be noted that the term of global citizenship is being used in many different ways (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller 2018). In connection with the current transformative phase of global state formation, global citizenship can be seen as an emerging legal concept. It is an expression of a nascent global state order that individuals are more and more accepted as subjects under international law who enjoy certain rights and responsibilities (Peters 2016). At this stage, however, there may be global citizenship to a degree but there is no global state. This,

---

[9] Baratta (2004 p. 255) lists 40 constitutions from Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia where this is the case.

too, can be interpreted as an element of the cultural lag described above. A full realization of global citizenship will require that this contradiction is resolved through the formation of a planetary polity and a global demos. In a sovereign states system, one cannot formally be a global citizen (Cabrera 2010, p. 73).

From a conceptual perspective, it is crucial to recognize that a global demos is the outcome and not a precondition of global state formation. By the definition suggested here, a demos is the populace of a given state unit.[10] A demos is never externally given, but always the result of political institutions (Zürn and Walter-Drop 2011, p. 265). It arises out of a political act, namely the founding of the state in question and its membership is legally defined by citizenship of that state. A demos does not exist ahead of a unit's creation. Whether or not there is a predominant common identity at that point, and whether or not that is relevant, are different questions. This applies just as much to a world state as to territorial states. Nonetheless, there is an important difference. In the case of a world state, the definition of who is entitled to global citizenship and thus part of the demos is straightforward: it is all human beings. There is no differentiation between some "we" and "them".

6 Layers of identity

Individual identity emerges over time from an increasing number of layers of self-perception and identification based on innumerable criteria such as descent, family and kinship, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social status, national citizenship, faith and religion, education and profession, political and ethical worldviews, or special interests that are interrelated and of varying degrees of significance. As Simmel (2009) pointed out over a century ago, each individual, starting with the accident of birth, develops more and more relationships and in the process identity is formed in the "intersection of social circles" the individual associates with (ch. 6). The social groups to which the individual belongs or affiliates with establish "a system of coordinates" that is more and more unique (p. 371f.). The individual importance of such layers or circles is a key factor that determines the degree of a person's loyalty and solidarity – or hostility – towards others individually and collectively.

Historically, the belonging to a particular nation-state has become an extraordinarily strong layer of identity for many people up to a degree that under circumstances they would be ready to kill and die "for their nation". As noted by Scheuerman (2011, p. 43), the construction of such dominant national identities allowed elites "to call on common people to fight against social peers – sometimes living just across the border – chiefly because they saw themselves as French, for example, rather than Dutch or German".

The extreme case can be called exclusive nationalism.[11] Exclusive nationalism can go along with the formation of an in-group morality that removes everybody else outside the group from the circle of empathic consideration and solidarity. Usually it will be both outwards and inwards oriented, excluding not only foreigners but also minority groups inside a given country itself.

---

[10] Recently, Koenig-Archibugi (2020) discussed five approaches to defining the demos in the field of political theory. It is beyond the scope of this piece to enter into this debate.

[11] On inclusive and exclusive nationalism, see also Dowds and Young (1996).

National identity and belonging, however, can have an inclusive character that is not determined by a xenophobic "us" and "them" hostility. The concept of inclusive nationalism that embraces and takes pride in a nation's diversity can draw on an influential essay of Renan (1882) who emphasized that a modern nation is neither constituted by race, language or religion, not even by geography or common interests, but by a conscious decision of its citizens of belonging together in solidarity and their readiness to making sacrifices in the interest of the common good.

For sure, national identity is not mutually exclusive to other layers of individual identity that relate to the local, regional or global level. In particular, surveys across the world indicate that there already is a sense of global identity among populations that a global state formation process can build upon.

In one such survey respondents in eight countries were informed that "global citizenship is the rights, responsibilities and duties that come with being part of the world" and then were asked whether they would consider themselves a global citizen in addition to a citizen of their country. In all countries a large majority of respondents affirmed this statement, on average 75 percent (ComRes 2017). In another survey in 18 countries, respondents were asked whether they see themselves *more* as a global citizen than a citizen of their country. In ten countries, a majority agreed (GlobeScan 2016). The broadest dataset in this field is probably provided by the fifth and sixth waves of the World Values Survey which covered 48 countries from 2005 to 2009 and 60 from 2010 to 2014 respectively. In both cases, on average more than 70 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that they see themselves as "a world citizen" (Inglehart et al. 2014a,b).

In another item of the survey ComRes (2017) respondents were informed that "a supranational organization places global interests above that of nation-states" and then were asked whether they think "a new supranational organization should be created to make enforceable global decisions to address global risks". Again, a large majority in all countries affirmed this statement, on average 71 percent whereas only 21 percent disagreed.

Since the European Union is the most advanced supranational unit at this time, it is interesting to note that the annual Eurobarometer surveys across EU member states indicate that trust of respondents in the EU is regularly higher than that placed in national governments and a clear majority of the population across member states identify as EU citizens.[12]

7 A case for world federalism

According to the above "growth sequence", the emergence of a new unit occurs in a process of centralization once this unit has the power to make decisions for a number of other units (Adams 1975, p. 214). This not only puts the new unit into a stronger position in its interaction with outside units. Insofar the original units are not absorbed, an internal hierarchical relationship comes about that allows the new unit to manage complexity more efficiently. In fact,

---

[12] In the Spring 2019 edition, for instance, trust in the European Union stood at 44 percent whereas trust in national governments at 34 percent (European Commission 2019).

empirically, the history of biological evolution shows that hierarchies developed as a natural way of governing complex systems as they greatly simplify their behaviour (Simon 1962, p. 481f.).

In the case of human societies, this process addresses a fundamental issue, as mastering problems and managing more energy inevitably involves an increase in socio-political complexity such as a cumulative expansion of bureaucracy, organizational structures and social differentiation (Tainter 1988). The economic benefits that accompany this growth in complexity steadily decrease and beyond a certain point they can tip over into the negative. According to Tainter (ibid., 118ff.) a collapse to less complex stages is inevitable in this phase unless new sources of productivity growth can be tapped. Integration at a higher level is a way to achieve this.

The international system based on nominally sovereign separate units is marked by high fragmentation unmitigated by any overarching global hierarchy, harmonization, governance or coordination. This also broadly applies to the United Nations with its dozens of programmes, specialised agencies, commissions, secretariats, funds and other "entities". As Weiss (2009) noted, it would be difficult to imagine "a better design for futile complexity".

The emergence of a coherent planetary polity with centralized decision-making power has the potential to contribute massively to a reduction in complexity and to lower transaction and opportunity costs. A loss in individual sovereignty on the part of states would by far be outweighed by the positive effects of an equivalent gain in shared sovereignty at the global level. One example for opportunity costs that also impacts the productive capacity of societies across the world is the immense expenditure on the military and on armaments which arises from the absence of an effective system of collective security and the security dilemma, among other things.[13] Under the current system, it is hard to imagine that the goal of general and complete disarmament can ever be achieved.[14] The overall benefits of effective global action on climate change or in the area of taxation are two other obvious cases that can be made.

Nonetheless, in human societies it can be observed that higher level units can be oppressive towards lower level component units. This is the case if integration has come about by force in the first place (which was excluded above as a possibility at the global scale) but it can also happen later, for instance if a central unit comes under totalitarian political control. Eisler (1987 p. 205) suggested to distinguish between domination and actualization hierarchies. While the former term describes hierarchies based on force, the latter describes such in which all component units play an organic role in maximizing their own and the whole's potentials. This brings us to another conceptual consideration: the creation of a planetary actualization hierarchy may only be successful if the component parts themselves are actualization hierarchies, too. It is hard to imagine that a state unit under control of an autocratic government would be able and willing to participate in supranational integration and actually give away power. Even so, this would most likely create ongoing tensions and conflicts at the levels of decision-making, implementation, principles and identity, among others. The European integration project, for instance, was exclusively driven by states under democratic government. Considering an "international federal government" for the time after the Second World War, a team at the US State Department came to the conclusion that this was not doable with the Soviet Union "even if it

---

[13] On the security dilemma, see Herz (1950).
[14] On this goal see UN (1978).

were theoretically desirable" (Barratta, 2004, p. 97). The biggest obstacle obviously was the totalitarian character of the Soviet Union at the time. In fact, recent research suggests that authoritarian states are much less likely to engage in publicly reported treaty-making compared to democracies and as a general rule do not participate in the international legal order to the same degree (Ginsburg 2020). In addition, authoritarian government contradicts the notion of citizenship per se as the latter implies political and civil rights. The realization of democracy and human rights at the level of today's nation-state units seems to be a key precondition for a full development of a planetary polity based on emancipative values. National and global democracy are thus closely interlinked.

The starting point in thinking about the features of a planetary polity is to recognize that there are component parts it will emanate from, namely today's individual state units which control taxation, redistribution, law enforcement and military power, among other things. In principle, these units, with the exception of failed states perhaps, are in a position of setting the framework for all others in their territory, including multinational corporations for instance. These state units would need to be bound by decision-making taken at the level of the planetary unit. This implies a transformation from today's system of international law to a system of world law (Bummel 2014). This also means that the component parts need to be included in the centralized decision-making process as otherwise they will hardly agree to transfer any of their power and help implement global decisions. However, as long as single component units are in a position to block decisions or to opt out of any of them unilaterally, no real transfer of power has taken place. What is needed instead is a fair system of qualified majority decision-making that takes into account minority interests. Finally, for a planetary polity to qualify as an actualization hierarchy, it would need to provide its component parts sufficient leeway to deal with affairs on their own that do not affect the whole. Ultimately this entails a federal system of planetary government.[15]

The history of federalist thinking and existing federal states provide ample material and models to draw upon for a conceptualization at the global scale. As Inman and Rubinfeld (2020, p. 1ff.) point out, the federal state "now seems to be the polity of choice, both for emerging democracies and for established states undergoing economic and democratic reforms". Countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Iraq, South Africa or Nepal have joined the club of modern federal democracies that includes Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Switzerland or the United States, among others. Part of the attraction of federalism is an ability of smaller component parts – the subnational units – to facilitate political participation and democratic deliberation and to provide local government services more efficiently. Further, a federal design enables component parts to provide protection against tyranny by a majority-controlled central government. It is a double security, though, because on the other hand, the central government can also check any tyranny developing at the level of any of the component parts based on common standards adopted for the whole, for instance in the federal constitution (ibid., p. 4). Federalism preserves the rights of the component natural units, and "allows for a considerable degree of independence and freedom in ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural realms" which helps defuse corresponding conflicts (Höffe 2007, p. 100). Different levels of government

---

[15] For an in-depth discussion of world federalism see Glossop (1993) and Höffe (2007).

within a federal centralized unit may reflect different layers of corresponding identities in the respective population and help create a balance between minority and majority interests.

Following the principle of subsidiarity, functions and powers thus would be dispersed vertically between the different levels of government from the local to the global, and always implemented at the lowest level possible. In some cases, subcontinental or continental levels of government that lie between the national and global levels may take over responsibilities, too. In addition, states and other component parts can carry out administrative responsibilities on behalf of the world federation, thus avoiding the creation of a large central bureaucracy. While the rules governing the legitimate use of force would be determined at the level of the planetary polity, there would be no centralized factual monopoly on military and police capabilities as these, too, would be dispersed following federalist principles. In a system of global fiscal federalism, the power of taxation would also be divided across different levels. Finally, democratic participation and representation of citizens as well as the rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances and the protection of minority rights would have to be implemented at all levels.[16]

Conceptually, the power and democratic legitimation of a federal world state emanates from a combination of civic legitimation based on individual citizens and state legitimation based on the will of all states as component parts (Höffe 2007, p. 219). Not only the interests of the component parts but also those of the central unit as a whole need to be reflected in the institutional design. This leads to a bicameral division of the federal legislature into two chambers: an assembly democratically elected by all citizens that represents the common interest of humanity and another composed of representatives of state units. The exact functioning of such a global parliament and of a planetary polity in general eventually will have to be determined in a global constitutional process. There is no lack of proposals.[17] The world legislature for instance could be empowered to adopt framework legislation that needs to be transposed into national law and global regulations with direct and universal applicability inspired by the example of law-making in the European Union. Today's Security Council could be replaced by a Joint Security Committee set up by the two legislative bodies. The UN's secretariat and the administrative structure of the UN system as well as intergovernmental organizations outside the UN could be transformed into a World Commission, acting as a coherent executive branch with cabinet functions. A reformed International Court of Justice can be made responsible to oversee the World Commission, and to ensure that global legislation is in accordance with constitutional rules and equally applied across states (Bummel 2018).

8 Concluding reflections

There is no determinism in human cultural evolution. History provides many examples not only for an integration of social units but also for their disintegration back to lower levels of complexity. It is not yet clear whether human civilization is on a path of global collapse or global unification. From a cosmic perspective, Earth in principle will remain habitable for a very long time. It will be about a billion years before the radiance and size of the sun have grown so

---

[16] This paragraph is based on Leinen and Bummel (2019).
[17] See for instance Schwartzberg (2013) and Lopez-Claros et al. (2020). On a UN Parliamentary Assembly as a step towards a global parliament, see Brauer and Bummel (2020).

much, and the surface temperature of the Earth has increased so much as a consequence, that life will no longer be possible on our planet. Nonetheless, at this moment in time human ability – or inability – to form a common planetary polity that is able to regulate and mitigate human impact on the Earth system and other species, as well as mitigate other global catastrophic risks, is one of the most important factors that will determine our future for centuries to come. Due to carbon emissions and other human impacts, the safe operating space for humanity that existed in the last 12,000 years of the Holocene is shrinking rapidly.[18] As Sagan (2011, p. 361) stressed, "if we are to survive, our loyalties must be broadened further, to include the whole human community, the entire planet Earth."

References

Abizadeh, A.: 'Does collective identity presuppose an other? On the alleged incoherence of global solidarity. American Political Science Review 99(1), 45–60. (2005)

Adams, R.N.: Energy and Structure. A Theory of Social Power. London: University of Texas Press, Austin (1975)

Baratta, J.P.: The Politics of World Federation. United Nations, UN Reform, Atomic Control. Vol. 1. Praeger Publishers, Westport (2004)

Bastian, A.: Die Völkerkunde und der Völkerverkehr unter seiner Rückwirkung auf die Volksgeschichte. Ein Beitrag zur Volks- und Menschenkunde. Weidmann, Berlin (1900)

Brauer, M., Bummel, A.: A United Nations Parliamentary Assembly: A policy review of Democracy Without Borders. Available at: www.democracywithoutborders.org/files/DWB_UNPA_Policy_Review.pdf. (2020).

Brown, D.E. et al. (eds.): Human Universals. McGraw-Hill, Boston (1991)

Bummel, A.: A world parliament and the transition from international law to world law. Cadmus 2(3), 121–128 (2014)

Bummel, A.: A renewed world organization for the 21st century'. Democracy Without Borders, available at: www.democracywithoutborders.org/files/DWBGCFAB.pdf (2018). Accessed 29 October 2020

Cabrera, L. The Practice of Global Citizenship. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (2010)

Carneiro, R.L.: The political unification of the world: Whether, when, and how - some speculations. Cross-Cultural Research 38(2), 162–77, (2004)

---

[18] On the safe operating space and planetary boundaries, see Rockström et al. (2009).

ComRes: Global Challenges Foundation - Global Risks Survey. Available at: https://global-challenges.org/wp-content/uploads/ComRes-2017.pdf (2017). Accessed: 31 October 2020.

Dowds, L., Young, K.: National identity. In: Jowell, R. et al. (eds.) British Social Attitudes: The 13th Report. Dartmouth Publishing (1996)

Eisler, R.: The Chalice & the Blade: Our History, Our Future. HarperOne, New York (1988)

Elias, N.: The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations. Revised edition. Translated by E. Jephcott. Blackwell, Oxford (2000)

European Commission: Standard Eurobarometer 91. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm. (2019)

Fromm, E.: The Heart of Man. American Mental Health Foundation, Riverdale NY (2010)

Gabbatiss, J.: Immigrants have been 'moving and mixing' across Europe since ancient times, DNA research reveals. The Independent (21 February 2018)

Ginsburg, T.: Authoritarian international law? American Journal of International Law 114(2), 221–260 (2020)

GlobeScan.: Global Citizenship: A Growing Sentiment Among Citizens Of Emerging Economies: Global Poll. 28 April 2016. Available at: https://globescan.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/BBC_GlobeScan_Identity_Season_Press_Release_April%2026.pdf (2016)

Glossop, R.: World Federation? A Critical Analysis of Federal World Government. McFarland, Jefferson, NC. (1993)

Graber, R.B.: Is a world state just a matter of time? A Population-Pressure Alternative. Cross-Cultural Research 38(2), 147–161 (2004)

Herz, J.: Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma. World Politics 2(2), 171–201 (1950)

Hobsbawm, E. J.: Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1992)

Höffe, O.: Democracy in an Age of Globalisation. Springer, Dordrecht. (2007)

Inglehart, R. et al. (eds): World Values Survey Wave 5: 2005-2009. Response V210.- I see myself as a world citizen'. JD Systems Institute. Available at: www.worldvaluessurvey.org (2014a). Accessed 29 October 2020

Inglehart, R. et al. (eds.): 'World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2014. Response V212.- I see myself as a world citizen'. JD Systems Institute. Available at: www.worldvaluessurvey.org (2014b). Accessed 29 October 2020

Inman, R.P., Rubinfeld, D.L.: Democratic federalism: The economics, politics, and law of federal governance. Princeton University Press, Princeton (2020)

Koenig-Archibugi, M. Who Are the People? Defining the Demos in the Measurement of Democracy. Political Studies, doi: 10.1177/0032321720966481 (2020)

Köpping, K.P.: Adolf Bastian and the Psychic Unity of Mankind: The Foundations of Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Germany. LIT, Münster (2005)

Leinen, J., Bummel, A.: A World Parliament: Governance and Democracy in the 21st Century. Democracy Without Borders, Berlin (2018)

Leinen, J., Bummel, A.: On the need of a democratic global government, Democracy Without Borders. Available at: www.democracywithoutborders.org/7085/ (2019). Accessed 29 October 2020

Lopez-Claros, A., Dahl, A. L. and Groff, M. Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century. Cambridge University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108569293. (2020)

Mathieson, I. et al.: The genomic history of southeastern Europe. Nature 555, 197–203 (2018)

Ogburn, W.F.: Cultural lag as theory. Sociology and Social Research XLI, 167–174 (1957)

Osterhammel, J.: Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats. 2nd edn. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen (2003)

Peters, A.: Beyond Human Rights: The Legal Status of the Individual in International Law. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (2016)

Pinker, S.: The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined. Viking, New York (2011)

Reagan, R.: Address to the 42d Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York. Available at: https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-42d-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-new-york (1987). Accessed 31 October 2020.

Renan, E.: What is a Nation? Text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882. In: Rundell, E. (trans.) Ernest Renan, Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?, Paris, Presses-Pocket, (1992)

Reves, E.: The Anatomy of Peace, 10th edn. Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York (1946)

Reysen, S., Katzarska-Miller, I.: The Psychology of Global Citizenship. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD. (2018)

Rockström, J. et.al.: Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity. Ecology and Society, 14(2), 32. (2009)

Sagan, C. Cosmos. Random House, London (2011)

Scheuerman, W.E.: The realist case for global reform. Polity Press, Cambridge (2011)

Schwartzberg, J. Transforming the United Nations System. Designs for a Workable World. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press. (2013)

Simmel, G.: Sociology: Inquiries into the Construction of Social Forms. Translated and edited by Blasi, A.J., Jacobs, A.K., Kanjirathinkal, M. rill Nijhoff. (2009)

Simon, H.A.: The architecture of complexity. Proceed. Am. Phil. Soc. 106(6), 467–482. (1962)

SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute): Trends in world military expenditure. SIPRI Fact Sheet. (April 2020)

Smedley, A. Smedley, B.D.: 'Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race. American Psychologist 60(1), 16–26 (2005)

Spencer, H.: The Principles of Sociology. Volume II, Part 2. Appleton and Company, New York (1897)

Tainter, J.A.: The Collapse of Complex Societies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1988)

Taylor, C. et al.: Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition. Princeton University Press, Princeton (1994)

UN: Resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its tenth special session. UN Doc. A/S-10/4 (1978)

Weber, E.: Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914. Stanford University Press, Palo Alto (1976)

Weiss, T.G.: What happened to the idea of world government?, International Studies Quarterly 53, 253–271 (2009)

Welzel, C.: Freedom Rising. Human Empowerment and the Quest for Emancipation. Cambridge University Press, New York (2013)

Wendt, A. Why a world state is inevitable. European Journal of International Relations 9(4), 491–542 (2003)

White, F.: The Overview Effect. American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Reston (2014)

Wissler, C. Man and Culture. First reprinting 1965. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell. (1923)

Zhao, T.: Redefining A Philosophy for World Governance. Translated by L. Tao. Palgrave Macmillan, London (2019)

Zürn, M., Walter-Drop, G.: Democracy and representation beyond the nation state. In: Alonso, S., Keane, J., Merkel, W. (eds.) The Future of Representative Democracy, pp. 258–28. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (2011)