Chapter 2

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# THE NEW PUBLIC SPHERE: GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY, COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

## The public sphere and the constitution of society

**BETWEEN THE STATE AND** society lies the public sphere, "a network for communicating information and points of view" (Habermas 1996, 360). The public sphere is an essential component of sociopolitical organization because it is the space where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society. Civil society is the organized expression of these views; and the relationship between the state and civil society is the cornerstone of democracy. Without an effective civil society capable of structuring and channeling citizen debates over diverse ideas and conflicting interests, the state drifts away from its subjects. The state's interaction with its citizenry is reduced to election periods largely shaped by political marketing and special interest groups and characterized by choice within a narrow spectrum of political option.

The material expression of the public sphere varies with context, history, and technology, but in its current practice, it is certainly different from the ideal type of eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere around which Habermas (1989) formulated his theory. Physical space—particularly public space in cities as well as universities—cultural institutions, and informal networks of public opinion formation have always been important elements in shaping the development of the public sphere (Low and Smith 2006). And of course, as John Thompson (2000) has argued, media have become the major component of the public sphere in the industrial society. Furthermore, if communication networks of any kind form the public sphere, then our society, the network society (Castells 1996, 2004a), organizes its public sphere, more than any other historical form of organization, on the basis of media communication networks (Lull 2007; Cardoso 2006; Chester 2007). In the digital era, this includes the diversity of both the mass media and Internet and wireless communication networks (McChesney 2007).

However, if the concept of the public sphere has heuristic value, it is because it is inseparable from two other key dimensions of the institutional construction of modern societies: civil society and the state. The public sphere is not just the media or the sociospatial sites of public interaction. It is the cultural/informational repository of the ideas and

projects that feed public debate. It is through the public sphere that diverse forms of civil society enact this public debate, ultimately influencing the decisions of the state (Stewart 2001). On the other hand, the political institutions of society set the constitutional rules by which the debate is kept orderly and organizationally productive. It is the interaction between citizens, civil society, and the state, communicating through the public sphere, that ensures that the balance between stability and social change is maintained in the conduct of public affairs. If citizens, civil society, or the state fail to fulfill the demands of this interaction, or if the channels of communication between two or more of the key components of the process are blocked, the whole system of representation and decision making comes to a stalemate. A crisis of legitimacy follows (Habermas 1976) because citizens do not recognize themselves in the institutions of society. This leads to a crisis of authority, which ultimately leads to a redefinition of power relationships embodied in the state (Sassen 2006).

As Habermas (1976) himself acknowledged, his theorization of democracy was in fact an idealized situation that never survived capitalism's penetration of the state. But the terms of the political equation he proposed remain a useful intellectual construct—a way of representing the contradictory relationships between the conflictive interests of social actors, the social construction of cultural meaning, and the institutions of the state. The notion of the public sphere as a neutral space for the production of meaning runs against all historical evidence (Mann 1986, 1993). But we can still emphasize the critical role of the cultural arena in which representations and opinions of society are formed, de-formed, and re-formed to provide the ideational materials that construct the basis upon which politics and policies operate (Giddens 1979).

Therefore, the issue that I would like to bring to the forefront of this analysis is that sociopolitical forms and processes are built upon cultural materials and that these materials are either unilaterally produced by political institutions as an expression of domination or, alternatively, are coproduced within the public sphere by individuals, interest groups, civic associations of various kinds (the civil society), and the state. How this public sphere is constituted and how it operates largely defines the structure and dynamics of any given polity.

Furthermore, it can be argued that there is a public sphere in the international arena (Volkmer 2003). It exists within the political/institutional space that is not subject to any particular sovereign power but, instead, is shaped by the variable geometry of relationships between states and global nonstate actors (Guidry, Kennedy, and Zald 2000). It is widely recognized that a variety of social interests express themselves in this international arena: multinational business, world religions, cultural creators, public intellectuals, and self-defined global cosmopolitans (Beck 2006). There is also a global civil society (Kaldor 2003), as I will try to argue below, and ad hoc forms of global governance enacted by international, conational, and supranational political institutions (Nye and Donahue 2000; Keohane 2002). For all these actors and institutions to interact in a nondisruptive manner, the same kind of common ideational ground that developed in the national public sphere should emerge. Otherwise, codestruction substitutes for cooperation, and sheer domination takes precedence over governance. However, the forms and processes of construction of the international public sphere are far from clear. This is because a number of simultaneous crises have blurred the relationships between national public spheres and the state, between states and civil society, between states and their citizens, and between the states themselves (Bauman 1999; Caputo 2004; Arsenault 2007). The crisis of the national public sphere makes the emergence of an international public sphere particularly relevant. Without a flourishing international public sphere, the global sociopolitical order becomes defined by the realpolitik of nation-states that cling to the illusion of sovereignty despite the realities wrought by globalization (Held 2004).

## Globalization and the nation-state

We live in a world marked by globalization (Held et al. 1999; Giddens and Hutton 2000; Held and McGrew 2007). Globalization is the process that constitutes a social system with the capacity to work as a unit on a planetary scale in real or chosen time. *Capacity* refers to technological capacity, institutional capacity, and organizational capacity. New information and communication technologies, including rapid long-distance transportation and computer networks, allow global networks to selectively connect anyone and anything throughout the world. *Institutional capacity* refers to deregulation, liberalization, and privatization of the rules and procedures used by a nation-state to keep control over the activities within its territory. *Organizational capacity* refers to the ability to use networking as the flexible, interactive, borderless form of structuration of whatever activity in whatever domain. Not everything or everyone is globalized, but the global networks that structure the planet affect everything and everyone. This is because all the core economic, communicative, and cultural activities are globalized. That is, they are dependent on strategic nodes connected around the world. These include global financial markets; global production and distribution of goods and services; international trade; global networks of science and technology; a global skilled labor force; selective global integration of labor markets by migration of labor and direct foreign investment; global media; global interactive networks of communication, primarily the Internet, but also dedicated computer networks; and global cultures associated with the growth of diverse global cultural industries. Not everyone is globalized: networks connect and disconnect at the same time. They connect everything that is valuable, or that which could become valuable, according to the values programmed in the networks. They bypass and exclude anything or anyone that does not add value to the network and/or disorganizes the efficient processing of the network's programs. The social, economic, and cultural geography of our world follows the variable geometry of the global networks that embody the logic of multidimensional globalization (Beck 2000; Price 2002).

Furthermore, a number of issues faced by humankind are global in their manifestations and in their treatment (Jacquet, Pisani-Ferry, and Tubiana 2002). Among these issues are the management of the environment as a planetary issue characterized by the damage caused by unsustainable development (e.g., global warming) and the need to counter this deterioration with a global, long-term conservation strategy (Grundmann 2001); the globalization of human rights and the emergence of the issue of social justice for the planet at large (Forsythe 2000); and global security as a shared problem, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global terrorism, and the practice of the politics of fear under the pretext of fighting terrorism (Nye 2002).

Overall, as Ulrich Beck (2006) has analyzed in his book *Power in the Global Age*, the critical issues conditioning everyday life for people and their governments in every country are largely produced and shaped by globally interdependent processes that move beyond the realm of ostensibly sovereign state territories. In Beck's formulation, the meta-power of global business challenges the power of the state in the global age, and "accordingly, the state can no longer be seen as a pre-given political unit" (p. 51). State power is also undermined by the counterpower strategies of the global civil society that seek a redefinition of the global system. Thus,

> What we are witnessing in the global age is not the end of politics but rather its migration elsewhere. . . . The structure of opportunities for political action is no longer defined by the national/international dualism but is now located in the "global" arena. Global politics have turned into global domestic politics, which rob national politics of their boundaries and foundations. (p. 249)

The growing gap between the space where the issues arise (global) and the space where the issues are managed (the nation-state) is at the source of four distinct, but interrelated, political crises that affect the institutions of governance:

1. *Crisis of efficiency:* Problems cannot be adequately managed (e.g., major environmental issues, such as global warming, regulation of financial markets, or counterterrorism intelligence; Nye and Donahue 2000; Soros 2006).
2. *Crisis of legitimacy:* Political representation based on democracy in the nation-state becomes simply a vote of confidence on the ability of the nation-state to manage the interests of the nation in the global web of policy making. Election to office no longer denotes a specific mandate, given the variable geometry of policy making and the unpredictability of the issues that must be dealt with. Thus, increasing distance and opacity between citizens and their representatives follows (Dalton 2005, 2006). This crisis of legitimacy is deepened by the practice of media politics and the politics of scandal, while image-making substitutes for issue deliberation as the privileged mechanism to access power (Thompson 2000). In the past decade, surveys of political attitudes around the world have revealed widespread and growing distrust of citizens vis-à-vis political parties, politicians, and the institutions of representative democracy (Caputo 2004; Catterberg and Moreno 2005; Arsenault 2007; Gallup International 2006).
3. *Crisis of identity:* As people see their nation and their culture increasingly disjointed from the mechanisms of political decision making in a global, multinational network, their claim of autonomy takes the form of resistance identity and cultural identity politics as opposed to their political identity as citizens (Barber 1995; Castells 2004b; Lull 2007).
4. *Crisis of equity:* The process of globalization led by market forces in the framework of deregulation often increases inequality between countries and between social groups within countries (Held and Kaya 2006). In the absence of a global regulatory environment that compensates for growing inequality, the demands of economic competition undermine existing welfare states. The shrinking of welfare states makes it increasingly difficult for national governments to compensate for structurally induced inequality because of the decreased capacity of national institutions to act as corrective mechanisms (Gilbert 2002).

As a result of these crises and the decreased ability of governments to mitigate them, nongovernmental actors become the advocates of the needs, interests, and values of people at large, thus further undermining the role of governments in response to challenges posed by globalization and structural transformation.

## The global civil society

The decreased ability of nationally based political systems to manage the world's problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society. However, the term *civil society* is a generic label that lumps together several disparate and often contradictory and competitive forms of organization and action. A distinction must be made between different types of organizations.

In every country, there are *local civil society actors* who defend local or sectoral interests, as well as specific values against or beyond the formal political process. Examples of this subset of civil society include grassroots organizations, community groups, labor unions,

interest groups, religious groups, and civic associations. This is a very old social practice in all societies, and some analysts, particularly Putnam (2000), even argue that this form of civic engagement is on the decline, as individualism becomes the predominant culture of our societies. In fact, the health of these groups varies widely according to country and region. For instance, in almost every country of Latin America, community organizations have become a very important part of the social landscape (Calderón 2003). The difference between these groups in varying nations is that the sources of social organization are increasingly diversified: religion, for instance, plays a major role in Latin America, particularly non-Catholic Christian religious groups. Student movements remain an influential source of social change in East Asia, particularly in South Korea. In some cases, criminal organizations build their networks of support in the poor communities in exchange for patronage and forced protection. Elsewhere, people in the community, women's groups, ecologists, or ethnic groups, organize themselves to make their voices heard and to assert their identity. However, traditional forms of politics and ideological sources of voluntary associations seem to be on the decline almost everywhere, although the patronage system continues to exist around each major political party. Overall, this variegated process amounts to a shift from the institutional political system to informal and formal associations of interests and values as the source of collective action and sociopolitical influence. This empowers local civil society to face the social problems resulting from unfettered globalization. Properly speaking, this is not the global civil society, although it constitutes a milieu of organization, projects, and practices that nurtures the growth of the global civil society.

A second trend is represented by *the rise of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with a global or international frame of reference in their action and goals.* This is what most analysts refer to as "global civil society" (Kaldor 2003). These are private organizations (albeit often supported or partly financed by public institutions) that act outside government channels to address global problems. Often they affirm values that are universally recognized but politically manipulated in their own interest by political agencies, including governments. In other words, international NGOs claim to be the enforcers of unenforced human rights. A case in point is Amnesty International, whose influence comes from the fact that it is an equal-opportunity critic of all cases of political, ideological, or religious repression, regardless of the political interests at stake. These organizations typically espouse basic principles and/or uncompromising values. For instance, torture is universally decried even as a means of combating greater "evils." The affirmation of human rights on a comprehensive, global scale gives birth to tens of thousands of NGOs that cover the entire span of the human experience, from poverty to illnesses, from hunger to epidemics, from women's rights to the defense of children, and from banning land mines to saving the whales. Examples of global civil society groups include Medecins Sans Frontieres, Oxfam, Greenpeace, and thousands of others. *The Global Civil Society Yearbook* series, an annual report produced by the London School of Economics Centre for Global Governance and under the direction of Mary Kaldor, provides ample evidence of the quantitative importance and qualitative relevance of these global civil society actors and illustrates how they have already altered the social and political management of global and local issues around the world (e.g., Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2004; Glasius, Kaldor, and Anheier 2005; Kaldor, Anheier, and Glasius 2006).

To understand the characteristics of the international NGOS, three features must be emphasized: In contrast to political parties, these NGOs have considerable popularity and legitimacy, and this translates into substantial funding both via donations and volunteerism. Their activity focuses on practical matters, specific cases, and concrete expressions of human solidarity: saving children from famine, freeing political prisoners, stopping the lapidation of women, and ameliorating the impact of unsustainable development on indigenous cultures. What is fundamental here is that the classical political argument of rationalizing decisions in

terms of the overall context of politics is denied. Goals do not justify the means. The purpose is to undo evil or to do good in one specific instance. The positive output must be considered in itself, not as a way of moving in a positive direction. Because people have come to distrust the logic of instrumental politics, the method of direct action on direct outputs finds increasing support. Finally, the key tactics of NGOs to achieve results and build support for their causes is media politics (Dean, Anderson, and Lovink 2006; Gillmor 2004). It is through the media that these organizations reach the public and mobilize people in support of these causes. In so doing, they eventually put pressure on governments threatened by the voters or on corporations fearful of consumers' reactions. Thus, the media become the battleground for an NGO's campaign. Since these are global campaigns, global media are the key target. The globalization of communication leads to the globalization of media politics (Costanza-Chock 2006).

*Social movements that aim to control the process of globalization* constitute a third type of civil society actor. In attempting to shape the forces of globalization, these social movements build networks of action and organization to induce a global social movement for global justice (what the media labeled, incorrectly, as the antiglobalization movement) (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Juris forthcoming). The Zapatistas, for instance, formed a social movement opposed to the economic, social, and cultural effects of globalization (represented by NAFTA) on the Mexican Indians and on the Mexican people at large (Castells, Yawaza, and Kiselyova 1996). To survive and assert their rights, they called for global solidarity, and they ended up being one of the harbingers of the global network of indigenous movements, itself a component of the much broader global movement. The connection between many of these movements in a global network of debate and coordination of action and the formalization of some of these movements in a permanent network of social initiatives aimed at altering the processes of globalization, are processes that are redefining the sociopolitical landscape of the world. Yet the movement for global justice, inspired by the motto that "another world is possible," is not the sum of nationally bound struggles. It is a global network of opposition to the values and interests that are currently dominant in the globalization process (Juris 2004). Its nodes grow and shrink alternately, depending on the conditions under which each society relates to globalization and its political manifestations. This is a movement that, in spite of the attempts by some leaders to build a program for a new world order, is better described by what it opposes than by a unified ideology. It is essentially a democratic movement, a movement that calls for new forms of political representation of people's will and interests in the process of global governance. In spite of its extreme internal diversity, there is indeed a shared critique of the management of the world by international institutions made up exclusively of national governments. It is an expression of the crisis of legitimacy, transformed into oppositional political action.

There is a fourth type of expression of global civil society. This is *the movement of public opinion*, made up of turbulences of information in a diversified media system, and of the emergence of spontaneous, ad hoc mobilizations using horizontal, autonomous networks of communication. The implications of this phenomenon at the global level—that were first exemplified by the simultaneous peace demonstrations around the world on February 15, 2003, against the imminent Iraq war—are full of political meaning. Internet and wireless communication, by enacting a global, horizontal network of communication, provide both an organizing tool and a means for debate, dialogue, and collective decision making. Case studies of local sociopolitical mobilizations organized by means of the Internet and mobile communication in South Korea, the Philippines, Spain, Ukraine, Ecuador, Nepal, and Thailand, among many other countries, illustrate the new capacity of movements to organize and mobilize citizens in their country while calling for solidarity in the world at large (Castells et al. 2006). The mobilization against the military junta in Myanmar in October

2007 is a case in point (Mydans 2007). The first demonstrations, mainly led by students, were relatively small, but they were filmed with video cell phones and immediately uploaded on YouTube. The vision of the determination of the demonstrators and of the brutality of the military regime amplified the movement. It became a movement of the majority of society when the Buddhist monks took to the streets to express their moral outrage. The violent repression that followed was also filmed and distributed over the Internet because the ability to record and connect through wireless communication by simple devices in the hands of hundreds of people made it possible to record everything. Burmese people connected among themselves and to the world relentlessly, using short message service (SMS) and e-mails, posting daily blogs, notices on Facebook, and videos on YouTube. The mainstream media rebroadcast and repackaged these citizen journalists' reports, made from the front line, around the world. By the time the dictatorship closed down all Internet providers, cut off mobile phone operators, and confiscated video-recording devices found on the streets, the brutality of the Myanmar regime had been globally exposed. This exposure embarrassed their Chinese sponsors and induced the United States and the European Union to increase diplomatic pressure on the junta (although they refrained from suspending the lucrative oil and gas deals between the junta and European and American companies). In sum, the global civil society now has the technological means to exist independently from political institutions and from the mass media. However, the capacity of social movements to change the public mind still depends, to a large extent, on their ability to shape the debate in the public sphere. In this context, at this instance of human history, how is governance articulated in social practice and institutions?

## Global governance and the network state

The increasing inability of nation-states to confront and manage the processes of globalization of the issues that are the object of their governance leads to ad hoc forms of global governance and, ultimately, to a new form of state. Nation-states, in spite of their multidimensional crisis, do not disappear; they transform themselves to adapt to the new context. Their pragmatic transformation is what really changes the contemporary landscape of politics and policy making. By *nation-states*, I mean the institutional set comprising the whole state (i.e., national governments, the parliament, the political party system, the judiciary, and the state bureaucracy). As a nation-state experiences crises wrought by globalization, this system transforms itself by three main mechanisms:

1. Nation-states associate with each other, forming networks of states. Some of these networks are multipurpose and constitutionally defined, such as the European Union; others focus on a set of issues, generally related to trade (e.g., Mercosur or NAFTA); while still others are spaces of coordination and debate (e.g., the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC and the Association of Southern Asian Nations known as ASEAN). In the strongest networks, participating states explicitly share sovereignty. In weaker networks, states cooperate via implicit or de facto sovereignty-sharing mechanisms.
2. States may build an increasingly dense network of international institutions and supranational organizations to deal with global issues—from general-purpose institutions (e.g., the United Nations), to specialized ones (e.g., the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, NATO, the European Security Conference, and the International Atomic Energy Agency). There are also ad hoc international agencies defined around a specific set of issues (e.g., environmental treaties).

3. States may also decentralize power and resources in an effort to increase legitimacy and/or attempt to tap other forms of cultural or political allegiance through the devolution of power to local or regional governments and to NGOs that extend the decision-making process in civil society.

From this multipronged process emerges a new form of state, the network state, which is characterized by shared sovereignty and responsibility, flexibility of procedures of governance, and greater diversity in the relationship between governments and citizens in terms of time and space. The whole system develops pragmatically via ad hoc decisions, ushering in sometimes contradictory rules and institutions and obscuring and removing the system of political representation from political control. In the network state, efficiency improves, but the ensuing gains in legitimacy by the nation-state deepen its crisis, although overall political legitimacy may improve if local and regional institutions play their role. Yet the growing autonomy of the local and regional state may bring the different levels of the state into competition against one another.

The practice of global goverance through ad hoc networks confronts a number of major problems that evolve out of the contradiction between the historically constructed nature of the institutions that come into the network and the new functions and mechanisms they have to assume to perform in the network while still relating to their nation-bound societies. The network state faces a *coordination problem* with three aspects: organizational, technical, and political. The state faces organizational problems because agencies that previously flourished via territoriality and authority vis-à-vis their societies cannot have the same structure, reward systems, and operational principles as agencies whose fundamental role is to find synergy with other agencies. Technical coordination problems take place because protocols of communication do not work. The introduction of the Internet and computer networks often disorganizes agencies rather than facilitating synergies. Agencies often resist networking technology. Political coordination problems evolve not only horizontally between agencies but also vertically because networking between agencies and supervisory bodies necessitates a loss of bureaucratic autonomy. Moreover, agencies must also network with their citizen constituencies, thus bringing pressure on the bureaucracies to be more responsive to the citizen-clients.

The development of the network state also needs to confront an ideological problem: coordinating a common policy means a common language and a set of shared values. Examples include opposition to market fundamentalism in the regulation of markets, acceptance of sustainable development in environmental policy, or the prioritization of human rights over the *raison d'etat* in security policy. More often than not, governments do not share the same principles or the same interpretation of common principles.

There is also a lingering geopolitical problem. Nation-states still see the networks of governance as a negotiating table upon which to impose their specific interests. There is a stalemate in the intergovernmental decision-making processes because the culture of cooperation is lacking. The overarching principles are the interests of the nation-state and the domination of the personal/political/social interests in service of each nation-state. Governments see the global state as an opportunity to maximize their own interests, rather than a new context in which political institutions have to govern together. In fact, the more the globalization process proceeds, the more contradictions it generates (e.g., identity crises, economic crises, and security crises), leading to a revival of nationalism and to the primacy of sovereignty. These tensions underlie the attempts by various governments to pursue unilateralism in their policies in spite of the objective multilateralism that results from global interdependence in our world (Nye 2002).

As long as these contradictions persist, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the world's

geopolitical actors to shift from the practice of a pragmatic, ad hoc networking form of negotiated decision making to a system of constitutionally accepted networked global governance (Habermas 1998).

## The new public sphere

The new political system in a globalized world emerges from the processes of the formation of a global civil society and a global network state that supersedes and integrates the preexisting nation-states without dissolving them into a global government. There is a process of the emergence of de facto global governance without a global government. The transition from these pragmatic forms of sociopolitical organization and decision making to a more elaborate global institutional system requires the coproduction of meaning and the sharing of values between global civil society and the global network state. This transformation is influenced and fought over by cultural/ideational materials through which the political and social interests work to enact the transformation of the state. In the last analysis, the will of the people emerges from people's minds. And people make up their minds on the issues that affect their lives, as well as the future of humankind, from the messages and debates that take place in the public sphere. The contemporary global public sphere is largely dependent on the global/local communication media system. This media system includes television, radio, and the print press, as well as a variety of multimedia and communications systems, among which the Internet and horizontal networks of communication now play a decisive role (Bennett 2004; Dahlgren 2005; Tremayne 2007). There is a shift from a public sphere anchored around the national institutions of territorially bound societies to a public sphere constituted around the media system (Volkmer 1999; El-Nawawy and Iskander 2002; Paterson and Sreberny 2004). This media system includes what I have conceptualized as mass self-communication, that is, networks of communication that relate many-to-many in the sending and receiving of messages in a multimodal form of communication that bypasses mass media and often escapes government control (Castells 2007).

The current media system is local and global at the same time. It is organized around a core formed by media business groups with global reach and their networks (Arsenault and Castells forthcoming). But at the same time, it is dependent on state regulations and focused on narrowcasting to specific audiences (Price 2002). By acting on the media system, particularly by creating events that send powerful images and messages, transnational activists induce a debate on the hows, whys, and whats of globalization and on related societal choices (Juris forthcoming). It is through the media, both mass media and horizontal networks of communication, that nonstate actors influence people's minds and foster social change. Ultimately, the transformation of consciousness does have consequences on political behavior, on voting patterns, and on the decisions of governments. It is at the level of media politics where it appears that societies can be moved in a direction that diverges from the values and interests institutionalized in the political system.

Thus, it is essential for state actors, and for intergovernmental institutions, such as the United Nations, to relate to civil society not only around institutional mechanisms and procedures of political representation but in public debates in the global public sphere. That global public sphere is built around the media communication system and Internet networks, particularly in the social spaces of the Web 2.0, as exemplified by YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and the growing blogosphere that by mid-2007 counted 70 million blogs and was doubling in size every six months (Tremayne 2007). A series of major conferences was organized by the UN during the 1990s on issues pertinent to humankind (from the condition of women to environmental conservation). While not very effective in terms of designing

policy, these conferences were essential in fostering a global dialogue, in raising public awareness, and in providing the platform on which the global civil society could move to the forefront of the policy debate. Therefore, stimulating the consolidation of this communication-based public sphere is one key mechanism with which states and international institutions can engage with the demands and projects of the global civil society. This can take place by stimulating dialogue regarding specific initiatives and recording, on an ongoing basis, the contributions of this dialogue so that it can inform policy making in the international arena. To harness the power of the world's public opinion through global media and Internet networks is the most effective form of broadening political participation on a global scale, by inducing a fruitful, synergistic connection between the government-based international institutions and the global civil society. This multimodal communication space is what constitutes the new global public sphere.

## Conclusion: public diplomacy and the global public sphere

Public diplomacy is not propaganda. And it is not government diplomacy. We do not need to use a new concept to designate the traditional practices of diplomacy. Public diplomacy is the diplomacy of the public, that is, the projection in the international arena of the values and ideas of the public. The public is not the government because it is not formalized in the institutions of the state. By *the public*, we usually mean what is common to a given social organization that transcends the private. The private is the domain of self-defined interests and values, while the public is the domain of the shared interests and values (Dewey 1954). The implicit project behind the idea of public diplomacy is not to assert the power of a state or of a social actor in the form of "soft power." It is, instead, to harness the dialogue between different social collectives and their cultures in the hope of sharing meaning and understanding. The aim of the practice of public diplomacy is not to convince but to communicate, not to declare but to listen. Public diplomacy seeks to build a public sphere in which diverse voices can be heard in spite of their various origins, distinct values, and often contradictory interests. The goal of public diplomacy, in contrast to government diplomacy, is not to assert power or to negotiate a rearrangement of power relationships. It is to induce a communication space in which a new, common language could emerge as a precondition for diplomacy, so that when the time for diplomacy comes, it reflects not only interests and power making but also meaning and sharing. In this sense, public diplomacy intervenes in the global space equivalent to what has been traditionally conceived as the public sphere in the national system. It is a terrain of cultural engagement in which ideational materials are produced and confronted by various social actors, creating the conditions under which different projects can be channeled by the global civil society and the political institutions of global governance toward an informed process of decision making that respects the differences and weighs policy alternatives.

Because we live in a globalized, interdependent world, the space of political codecision is necessarily global. And the choice that we face is either to construct the global political system as an expression of power relationships without cultural mediation or else to develop a global public sphere around the global networks of communication, from which the public debate could inform the emergence of a new form of consensual global governance. If the choice is the latter, public diplomacy, understood as networked communication and shared meaning, becomes a decisive tool for the attainment of a sustainable world order.

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