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Introduction: World Society

World Society Research Group

The totality of transborder relations seems to be undergoing lasting changes, but we still lack coherent analytical categories that could reflect this process conceptually and identify its dynamic and implications. The concept of 'world society' is one attempt to supply such categories: a promising concept, but one that always has been and that remains ambiguous and disputed, since it is claimed by numerous parties to the debate and can be amplified in a variety of ways. This chapter sets out criteria for a conceptualization of world society with the help of which we want to analyze some of the core questions that political science addresses regarding the internationalization of politics. The research based on this concept and documented in the contributions to this volume opens up different dimensions of society formation beyond the state. It deals with the complex interplay between processes of transborder society formation (*Vergesellschaftung*) and community formation *(Vergemeinschaftung)*, a distinction we take up from Max Weber.[1] We are interested in the patterns of interaction between different collective actors on different levels and spheres of interaction against the background of new regulatory needs confronting the state and the simultaneous decline of its regulation competence. This implies looking at problems of government as well as governance. In what dimensions and at what levels can processes of change in the system of international relations be identified? What are their implications for effective governance and for legitimate government? How are actors responding to the new challenges?

Like world society, the concept of 'international community' has a well-established place in the standard vocabulary of political science. The idea of an international community is especially popular in the everyday language of diplomacy. Regular appeals are made to this community to deal with abuses and with problems that arise across borders. The difficulty with this usage, however, is that it can serve to disguise uncertainty about what exactly is being said. It insinuates that a fully anarchic state of nature no longer prevails in re-

lations between states, but it also affirms the assumption of anarchy by appealing to the states to act together in the absence of rules that would prescribe to them to do so.

In what follows we will try to show how the terms 'international community', 'international system', 'international society', and 'world society' are related to each other. Our main goal is to advance the construction of ideal types, which will help us to prepare a foil against which a more precise reading of transborder relations can be developed. In doing so we include German literature in order to help to overcome language barriers that prevail and broaden even in International Relations (IR). We proceed by referring in the second section to earlier conceptualizations of world society, newer international political economy considerations pertaining to the concept, and the need to go beyond both. In the third section we take up Max Weber's distinction between *Vergesellschaftung* (society formation) and *Vergemeinschaftung* (community formation) and treat the international *community* as the concomitant of a *society* formation process. In the course of this discussion, the international system as a self-help system that is (at best) balanced in power-political terms, is distinguished from an interstate, rule-governed international society (Bull 1977) and, with the increase in the significance of societal actors, from world society (fourth section). Our concept of world society is designed to capture the growing complexity of world affairs in terms of the diffusion of actors as well as the differentiation of levels of interaction and of spheres of interaction. With the help of the distinction between society and community formation we also seek to identify integrative and disintegrative tendencies and to render them accessible to analysis (fifth section).

In our final section we deal briefly with the normative implications of the concept of world society. There is no doubt that positive expectations are frequently associated with the development of a world society. It must for the time being remain an unanswered question, whether the appearance of world society implies progress toward a more peaceful and just world order or whether it will simply lead to a transformation of collective violence.

COBWEBS, MARKETS, AND INSTITUTIONS

With the cobweb model presented in his book *World Society* (1972), John Burton aspired to overcome the state-centric view of the world expressed in the very name of the discipline Inter*national* Relations: "There are important religious, language, scientific, commercial and other relationships in addition to a variety of formal, non-governmental institutions that are world-wide" (Burton 1972: 19). Burton sees this distinction not as a play on words, but as an alternative approach to research. The state continues to be viewed as a prominent actor, but according to Burton an approach that remains focused on the state alone could not capture the genuinely new and important developments taking place in the international

system: "The political and social life of people within states, which is always altering with changed thinking and new technologies, influences relations among states" (Burton 1972: 20).

Burton's cobweb model is an attempt to render visible these forms of interaction, which take place at the substate level and outside the state, and to make them accessible to analysis. Ernst-Otto Czempiel comments: "If we see the world as a world society, we must be interested in everything that happens, in every relationship. The model focuses on human behavior and on all human beings as its starting-point" (Czempiel 1981: 70). This, however, points directly to the weakness of the Burtonian concept. It offers no criteria according to which we could systematically select objects of investigation and specify research questions. The same holds true of Martin Shaw's recent definition of *global society* as "the entire complex of social relations between human beings on a world scale" or "a diverse social universe in which the unifying forces of modern production, markets, communications and cultural and political modernization interact with many global, regional, national and local segmentations and differentiations" (Shaw 1994: 17, 19).

Burton's critique of the realist school's model of the world of states rests on a liberal pluralist understanding of international politics. A contrasting treatment from the early 1970s is Klaus Jürgen Gantzel's globalist-emancipatory concept of world society (on these labels see Viotti and Kauppi 1993). Gantzel's main criticism relates to the neglect of historically rooted dependency structures. A lack of interest in domination and violence

> diminishes the political effectiveness of the scholarly effort to use critical elucidation to counteract a resigned acceptance of the apparently inevitable, and to empower human beings, above all the oppressed and suffering, to act effectively against violence and illegitimate systems of rule, in other words: to defend their own interests. (Gantzel 1975: 9)

World society is thus constituted through the social struggles to overcome dependency and domination.

Though the language has changed, recent years have seen a continuing interest in the political economy of international relations. As one of the most creative scholars in this field of study, Robert Cox has demonstrated the necessity to see interstate relations in the context of a complex interplay between the world economy and changing forms of political hegemony (Cox 1981: 126 ff, 1987, 1994: 45 ff). Cox studies social processes with transnational effects. According to this model the state has no role as an independent actor detached from its social base. Instead, state policy formulation is understood as a function of dominant social coalitions that use the state to further their own interests.

From this perspective, the creation of transnational interest groups that affect the political process at both state and interstate levels assumes a growing significance. Because of increasing transborder economic interdependence and the capacity of

transnational companies to affect political structures, it is increasingly difficult to trace social processes back to causes within single states. Instead, social processes are seen as emerging from the transnational conditions dictated by an inter- and transstate coalition of political and economic elites functioning as a hegemonic 'historical bloc' (Gramsci). According to this interpretation, 'hegemony' means an international order that reflects the interests of dominant social groups and makes use of both national and international political institutions (like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization).

The potential for conflict in world society arises, according to this view, out of the disparity between the political organization of individual states and that of their external environment. While the former, at least in the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) states, rests on the democratic principle, the latter is, as a result of the liberalization of the 1980s, characterized by market forces that are motivated neither by political loyalties nor by social considerations. Since the state has lost much of its competence as a regulator of interactions between intrastate society and the external environment, the consequence is a growing contradiction between the internal and international orders. Because of the qualitative increase in the interdependence of economic relations among states since the Second World War, the liberalized international order is gaining a greater influence on the structuring of intrastate social relations and becoming structurally contradictory to the social needs of communities constituted within state borders (among German scholars see also Altvater 1994: 517 ff ; Narr and Schubert 1994; Neyer 1995: 287 ff).

According to this view world society appears to be a world *market* society, in which the freedom of action of individual states to take decisions on political, social, and cultural questions is eroded by the increasingly transnational effects of processes determined by nonterritorial economic actors. Along this line, Jens Siegelberg, who is working on a critical theory of the causes of war, speaks of capital's inherent tendency to create a division of labor through which national class structures are being internationalized (Siegelberg 1994: 144; see also Wolf 1995). What emerges as the central attribute of world society then is not interdependence in the sense of balanced relations, which, in principle, give all participants a chance to realize their own goals, but, again, domination and dependency.

This concept of world society belongs to the critical tradition of theories of imperialism. However, it differs from the latter by freeing itself from a purely negative assessment of the world market and by taking up its civilizing functions. Nevertheless, the underlying assumption of a primacy of economics underestimates the dynamics of state policies in a states system (Shaw 1994: 15). As will be argued later in this volume (see Klaus Dieter Wolf's chapter), by entering into binding arrangements among each other, governments follow interests of their own and may not be conceptualized as mere handmaidens of dominant classes.

In our own conceptualization, we take up the challenges of both the cobweb and the world market approach. But in doing so, we look for the knots and ten-

sions in the cobweb and its various layers, and we look at markets as only one element shaping public policies and the formation of polities. We want to address the interrelationship between integrating and disintegrating tendencies in present-day political, economic, and social developments in a world context, but we also want to allow for erratic movements that cannot be explained in a 'simple' dialectical fashion regarding the 'unity of contradictions' on the present world scene (see Albert and Lapid 1997). Our approach gives leeway to look at both, the chances for a more peaceful world and new constellations of conflict that could result in new forms of organized violence.[2]

Among the structural changes pertinent to our questions are the development of a routine in global sourcing and global strategic alliance building among the big firms, the inclusion of medium-sized firms in this process through 'deep' networks of production and marketing; furthermore the appearance of financial markets that are functionally off-shore though they remain formally within the reach of state control, and the relative dematerialization of the world economy, which is a corollary to the historical shift of major economic activities first from the primary to the secondary and now to the tertiary sector (service economies). The structural changes in the world economy do not entail that local, regional, and national locations lose their significance. On the contrary, they contribute to the political accentuation of local and regional differences by encouraging the pursuit of active policies by towns and cities, regions, and states to enhance their global competitiveness. Under the simultaneous influence of global sourcing and local differentiation, the role of territoriality is changing. Interstate transactions can no longer be adequately analyzed as simple crossings of borders; rather, the borders themselves are changing in the sense that they are now more porous, and transstate economic spaces and transnational communities are being formed. In this way economic, political, and societal spaces are becoming less and less congruent (see also the chapter by Mathias Albert and Lothar Brock).

These transnational communities serve as links among different societies, but also pose a challenge to the cohesion of national societies. New social conflicts arise which place in question the state's socially integrative functions. It is not convincing to analyze such developments as the 'abdication' of the nation-state. What we are seeing are the initial stages of new forms of statehood, 'trans-statehood' and horizontal political integration, which go beyond the old forms of international cooperation and norm-building, and through which the mismatch between political territoriality and economic and societal developments is reduced. Michael Zürn (chapter 9) speaks of a decline in the functions of the nation-state as a result of globalization, which leads to an uneven denationalization. Albert and Brock develop the concept of debordering in order to grasp the dynamic and the direction of ongoing changes. Debordering may result in new forms of political integration. But it may also produce new inter- and transnational conflicts. The latter in our view are not incompatible with, but rather constitutive of, the development of world society.

DIMENSIONS OF WORLD SOCIETY

In our attempt to develop a more precise approach to the questions we have out-
lined, we start from Tönnies' and Weber's distinction between 'community'
(*Gemeinschaft*) and 'society' (*Gesellschaft*). Ferdinand Tönnies' analysis builds on
what he sees as a fundamental dualism in human purposes and experience. Every
human being possesses a natural and unreflected 'inner will' (*Wesenswillen*) and
an artificial and calculating 'will to choose' (*Kürwillen*). The former moves human
beings to act out of an affective impulse, while the latter guides them to action in
pursuit of external goals. According to Tönnies, the *Wesenswillen* therefore leads
to a natural order in the community; differentiating it according to ties of blood,
spirit, and location. Society, in Tönnies' view, has to be understood as a cultural or
moral atrophy of community (Tönnies 1972: 208, 215). In society, human actions
follow the calculating *Kürwillen*. However, if Tönnies' concept is applied to inter-
national relations, as Buzan (1993: 327 ff) has attempted to do, two major prob-
lems arise: a sense of community is dependent on a value context that does not
exist on a global scale. In addition the specific conception of community results in
a negative evaluation of the idea of society.

Max Weber turns the community-society distinction around. He sets out four
different types of action:

- strategic (*zweckrational*) (means are adjusted to ends);
- value-rational (*wertrational*) (specific means are considered as ends in
  themselves);
- affectual or emotional;
- traditional (guided by custom).

According to Weber, social relations do not presuppose feelings of community,
but manifest themselves as the behavior of a plurality of actors insofar as the ac-
tion of each takes account of that of the others' (Weber 1968). According to
Weber, social relations do not arise out of the higher functional requirements of a
social system, but through subjective acts "which do not assume any 'whole'"
(Bauer 1993: 25). For Weber, a social relationship is called 'communal' (*Verge-
meinschaftung*) if and so far as the orientation of social action is based on a sub-
jective feeling of the parties, whether affectual or traditional, that they belong to-
gether. A social relationship will, on the other hand, be called 'associative'
(*Vergesellschaftung*) if and in so far as the orientation of social action within it
rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated
agreement, whether the basis of rational judgment be absolute values or reasons
of expediency (see also Weber 1968).

In employing the ideal types of society formation (*Vergesellschaftung*) and
community formation (*Vergemeinschaftung*), we are well aware of the fact that
we may be facing some categorical problems. For Weber, *Vergesellschaftung* and

Vergemeinschaftung clearly were phenomena that referred to persons as actors. Thus, to extend the search for processes of *Vergesellschaftung* and *Vergemein-schaftung* to involve collective actors may mean that the clear Weberian definition of the ideal types as strictly actor-based is put in doubt, not least in relation to the question who or what can be the carrier of a collective identity.[3]

Emanuel Richter's methodological analysis of the notion of community (chapter 4) points in a similar direction. It may in the end very well turn out that in the light of global processes the very concepts of 'community' and 'society' will have to be redefined in a fundamental fashion. Richter reminds us, however, that this may be easier said than done, particularly regarding the idea of 'community'. While he shows and clearly dissects the immense conceptual baggage that this idea has accumulated over the centuries, he also points out that it is a concept normatively laden in a quite distinct fashion. Thus, while in communitarian thinking community has a decidedly positive connotation, it immediately arouses suspicions in any social science discourse in Germany. Instead of lamenting this state of affairs, however, Richter calls for research on the 'global network' to be supplemented by a research on such basic ideas as Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

Since *Vergesellschaftung* and *Vergemeinschaftung* are ideal types, most forms of actually existing social relations are mixtures of communal and associative relations. Social relations described in this way create a coherent social context through the existence of binding rules and the expectation that these rules will be adhered to. This ideal-typical distinction can be applied to international relations in different ways. One way would be to follow Hedley Bull's perspective on international society (Bull 1977: 13–14, Bull and Watson 1984c: 430 ff). 'International society' refers to:

> A group of states (or more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculation of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consensus common rules and institutions, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements. (Bull and Watson 1984b: 1)

In Weberian terms we could speak here of international society as a rationalization of the order of an international system. Bull's concept serves to identify a central element of qualitative change in the system of international relations according to the criterion of its higher level of organization. However, Bull sees the 'common set of rules' and the 'common institutions' as pertaining only to states. They are the only actors involved in this society-formation. Buzan has subsequently attempted to incorporate different social actors in this concept by drawing a further distinction between 'international society' and 'world society' (Buzan 1993: 327 ff; the latter term is identical with 'world community' as used in Chris Brown 1995: 9 ff). While system and society are said to belong to the level of interstate relations, the transnational level (world society) is to be incor-

porated by means of the community dimension, which Bull ignores. Buzan conceptualizes the two terms as complementary and even symbiotic:

> International society provides the political framework without which world society would face all the dangers of primal anarchy. In return, world society provides the gemeinschaft foundation without which international society remains stuck at a fairly basic level. (Buzan 1993: 351)

Buzan's assignment of societal elements to the international level and of community elements to the transnational level is intriguing. But it is also problematic. The possibility that community formation could occur within the state system is ruled out in advance, and secondly (and this is the more serious weakness of Buzan's classification), this understanding of politics implies that only states can be political actors. It does not seem to us to be helpful to investigate the societal element exclusively at the interstate level, and the community element at the intersocietal level. In our view it is especially important to consider nonstate actors as agents of society formation, and state actors as being involved in community formation. We assume that it is in the field of societal actors and of transnational relations that structural elements of world society have been forming for some time now. Research that focuses either on interstate relations or on understanding intersocietal relations cannot live up to complexities of society and community formation at the inter- and transstate levels.

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF ACTORS
AND LEVELS AND SPHERES OF INTERACTION

Regime analysis, too, with its focus on international *Vergesellschaftung*, namely international institutionalization, has remained basically state-centric. It is only very recently that research on international regimes, employing two-level games analysis, has corrected the neglect of interrelationships between political systems or parts of them, societal groups, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions that resulted from a preoccupation with the 'state' as a black box. If one wanted to stick to a more state-centered approach, there would be the need to problematize the neorealist notion of states as like units. Systemwide processes like the development of a world society affect the structure of state units, and in turn, this affects the structure of the international system. In his contribution, Georg Sørensen (chapter 6) draws attention to the emergence of 'unlike units' as a result of the interplay between international and domestic factors. Sørensen identifies three different types of states in the present international system: the 'Westphalian state', the 'premodern state'—mainly in Sub-Sahara Africa—and the 'postmodern state' in the European Union. These different types of states point to the unevenness of world society formation.

Picking up on this issue, Zürn's analysis deals with the dilemma of uneven denationalization: Trying to maintain their political capacity to fulfill governance functions, the nation-states create international governance structures, which may be still inadequate in terms of effective problem-solving, but which certainly increase decision-makers' autonomy from societal control. This creates problems for democracy for instance in the form of the democratic deficit of the European Union (EU). Zürn suggests the democratization of the territorial representation of the EU by way of introducing elements of direct democracy in order to overcome the democratic deficit of international governance. Wolf approaches this problem from a different perspective. His treatment of the problem of the democratic deficit refers specifically to the differentiation of actors and levels of interaction and the growing institutionalization of international governance as the two basic elements of our concept of world society. It also underlines that this concept does not simply replace a state-centered point of view with a society-centered one. Rather, in trying to understand how different types of actors interact, strategic and concrete goals are attributed to governments and nongovernmental actors at the same time. In this context, the concept of world society serves to explain the democratic deficit not as a mere accident but as the result of the strategic behavior of governments striving for internal and external autonomy.

In the present debate on the formation of world society, on citizen participation at the international level, and the control of international decision-making processes, increasing attention is being paid to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In chapter 10, Hilmar Schmidt and Ingo Take consider the contributions of NGOs to the democratization of international politics. They ask under which conditions this democratization may be reconciled with the goal of increased efficiency in international problem-solving processes. Just as states' behavior is oriented toward strategic goals, so do nonstate actors pursue both substantial goals (in attempting to deal with specific problems) and strategic goals—understood here as goals serving the maintenance of these actors' general capacity to act.

With a view to the pursuit of active policies by towns and cities, regions, and states, it is important to realize, as Jürgen Neyer points out in chapter 11, that substate units that play a role beyond the confines of national borders (like global cities) have to be regarded not only as sites but also as actors. To a certain extent they are involved in global sourcing in their own right, though not independent from the states. By pursuing these activities, they not only make use of existing differences between economic sites around the world but also deepen the unevenness of world economic development, causing politically precarious social cleavages even in 'their own countries'. The state itself tends to react in a procyclical way by displaying a growing reluctance to supplying redistributive transfer-payments. Neyer also demonstrates that global cities, while being centers of economic command and control, are also sites of social poverty and inequality. This serves as a special incentive on the part of the global cities to combine strategic goals vis-à-vis the central state with substantial problem-solving. This is be-

coming more difficult because of the tendency on the part of the state to practice what may be called an 'internal externalization' of the costs of its own strategic goal attainment. In this respect, the principle of subsidiarity, which has been acknowledged within the European Union as a means for regulating competence in favor of the state level of action, has come to serve both the central governments in their endeavor to get rid of economic and social problems, and the globalized substate actors in their endeavor to widen their margins of action for the mobilization of international resources.

These aspects of world society formation need to be looked at in greater detail. Thus, the concept of world society we are proposing here is also designed to stimulate actor- and problem-specific case studies, which could address the questions that arise from the basic assumption that world society formation is actually taking place. One such actor- and problem-specific case study is undertaken by Ingo Take in chapter 12. He looks at the contribution of NGOs to international environmental cooperation. Like states, which form international alliances to deal with the new global challenges, NGOs build transnational networks and organizations to balance the institutionalization of interstate relations. By offering a systematic review of the mechanisms through which NGOs interact with domestic, national, transnational, and international actors, and through which they also influence international relations, Take shows how the differentiation in the levels of operation constitutes a dimension of change, which all actors, be they states or NGOs, have to take into account.

Another promising field of investigation is the development of world society via economic, political, and societal 'debordering' processes in the world of states (developed by Albert and Brock). The concept of 'debordering' seeks to understand substantial modifications in the interrelationship between territory and states as an increasing incongruence of political, economic, and social spaces. Debordering goes together with the emergence of new political spaces and new forms of politics that at least partly compensate for the functional weaknesses of the territorial state. Debordering is to be understood not as an abdication on the part of the state, but as a change in the nature of statehood. This change can be seen from the political ethical point of view as a positive development, as long as pluralistic community-building and effective and democratic control remain possible. However, debordering can also give rise to perceived needs for the drawing of new borders leading to new exclusions. This observation underlines the integrative functions of borders between territorial states, and the necessity of finding new functional equivalents to them.

It would also be worth asking what effect new world-societal regulation requirements have on state policies and on the actions of nonstate actors. Will state policies orient themselves toward the requirements of effective problem-solving, and so perhaps give societal actors more of a role in the policy process, in order to set free corporatist resources? Or will the states act strategically and try to win back freedom of action and autonomy from their societies by committing them to keep to binding international agreements? In

chapter 8, Hilmar Schmidt shows that states, if understood as problem-solvers, must not only change their behavior toward the external world, but also adapt themselves internally to the new requirements of world society. States in world society face a rapidly growing agenda of problems and equally increasing demands of societal actors to participate in foreign policy decision making. Schmidt suggests that the specific design of domestic policy-networks has an impact on the problem-solving capacity of states and that therefore states should include their societal subsystems in the political process.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Our concept of world society is summarized in figure 1.1, which depicts the growing complexity of social relations in world society.

At this point, changes in international relations may be understood as a process of global society formation (development of a world society), which goes beyond the mere intensification of interdependence and interaction. However, we still need to address the question of community formation and of the relationship between society and community formation. Weber himself stressed the reflexive dimension of community formation (*Vergemeinschaftung*). Collective identities are usually—if not always—created by the perception of difference and sameness. Members of the same community realize that they have one or more things in common, which distinguish the members of the emerging community from all those who differ from them in this (these) respect(s).

All kinds of other visible differences can, in a given case, give rise to repulsion and contempt [...]. Seen from their positive aspect, however, these differences may give rise to consciousness of kind, which may become as easily the bearer of group relationships. (Weber 1968: Vol. 1, 365)

Figure 1.1   International System—International Society—World Society

International System	Interaction and interdependence.
International Society	In addition: institutionalized collective regulation of behavior between states, based rationally on shared interests. As relations between states intensify with the common aim of raising the level of organization of the international system, by means of the development of norms and institutions, 'international society' constitutes itself. In this sense, society formation going beyond the self-help system begins.
World Society	In addition: the diffusion of actors and differentiation of levels of action, in the sense of increased complexity and the continued existence of state actors; in this way the transnational dimension of world society as further transborder society formation between nonstate actors is opened up.

This does not presuppose that the members of a community know each other or actively pursue community formation (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) (see also Weber 1968: Vol. 1, 365). The feeling of belonging together and of demarcation are sufficient: they form the social construction that is relevant to the members of a group.

The distinction between society and community formation is one between ideal types. In real life, social relationships consist of a mixture of these two types. Processes of community formation also play a role at the level of international relations. By 'community formation' we mean the coming into being of a feeling of solidarity that is not reliant on interests or calculations of benefit. Buzan sees nongovernmental organizations as the agents of such processes, and states (governments) as the agents of society-formation processes. As mentioned above, we regard this restrictive classification as problematic. It is true that transnational networks of action groups linked by affectual ties (for example, solidarity) are particularly noticeable in the areas of environmental protection, development policy, or the defense of human rights. But first, this by no means covers the whole spectrum of nonstate actors; it excludes those economic organizations that are for us especially important—multinational companies and economic interest groups. Second, a process of society formation is also taking place between the groups mentioned, to the extent that they set up permanent organizational structures whose own bureaucratic interests grow as their political weight increases. Third and most important, society formation at the international level is taking place in a complex interplay with processes of international community formation. There may be community formation at the interstate level—for instance in the form of the much acclaimed 'community of democratic states' or among heads of states in the course of international negotiations. For this reason, we consider the use of the term 'international community' to be more than just a figure of speech. It identifies an aspect of international cooperation and of the establishment of rules that we lose sight of if we exclude community formation at the outset from considerations of society formation in international relations. Figure 1.2 underlines this understanding of the different levels of society and community formation.

In his contribution to this volume, Christoph Weller (chapter 3) conceptualizes *Vergemeinschaftung* on the basis of Weber's understanding of the latter as the formation of collective identities. National identity as one specific type of collective identity has been and still is the most important form of *Vergemeinschaftung* in international relations (see also Anderson 1991). As long as the borders of *Vergesellschaftung* and *Vergemeinschaftung* were largely congruent, the interplay between the two processes was of minor relevance and rarely taken into consideration. As an intensive process of antagonistic community formation, the East-West conflict dominated collective identity building, because the demarcation against the respective adversary determined the perception of nearly all others. With globalization, more differences can be perceived. For example, in many places *regional* collective identities have emerged, which chal-

Figure 1.2 Positioning World Society

	Society Formation	*Community Formation*
(a) International Relations	*International society formation* among states (for example, international institutions)	*International community formation* among specific states or representatives of states (for example, heads of states in intergovernmental negotiations)
(b) Transnational Relations	*Transnational society formation* among nonstate actors (for example, pressure groups or private companies organized across borders)	*Transnational community formation* among nonstate actors (for example, sectoral or regional groups)
(a)/(b)	*World society* (includes processes of international and transnational society and community formation)	

lenge existing states. At the same time we can observe a growing significance of *transnational* collective identities through issue specific coalition building across borders. Weller offers some considerations in how to deal with these forms of community formation in the developing world society, which he views as Janus-faced pointing to both integrative and disintegrative effects. On the basis of social-psychological theories he addresses the new nationalism, understood as securing or as renewal of emotional demarcations that have been challenged through the increase of cross-border interactions.

If perceptions of differences between 'us' and 'them' converge in different issue areas, for example, security, welfare, and culture, confrontation becomes more likely (see Weller 1995), and global society formation could be accompanied by violence. This evaluation is also confirmed in Chris Brown's contribution to this volume (chapter 5), in which he points to the fact that within the advanced industrial world, a much higher level of *Vergesellschaftung* and *Vergemeinschaftung* exists than vis à vis and within the states and societies that make up the 'rest of the world'. This raises important questions about the universal applicability and viability of international and transnational society and community (see figure 1.2). A deepening sense of community in the advanced industrial world, Brown argues, would impede the formation of a universal international society (*Vergesellschaftung*) between states. We agree with Chris Brown that a universal world community remains an impossibility, since *Vergemeinschaftung* always rests on demarcations from others.[4]

International societies seem to perform particularly well when they are accompanied by well-defined elements of community formation. A good example

would be the existence of a community among heads of states who have learned to trust each other as the result of regular interaction, including communicative action resulting in a better mutual understanding (Müller 1994).

The society of Western states during the East-West conflict could also be described in terms of a community of states in respect of its affirmation of certain shared values and conceptions of order. The European Union, too, is clearly based on something more than a strategically motivated coincidence of interests; there is also a shared perception of belonging together, a certain degree of solidarity that seems to be a prerequisite for including the needs of the other members of the community in the building of one's own preferences.

It is precisely the progress in society formation in international relations that has set in motion a reaction against universalism (see Axtmann 1995: 93). This can also be seen as community formation within a certain group of states. One example would be the question of the 'Western' character of human rights, which became a much-debated topic when the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) states, after the 1993 Vienna Human Rights Conference, spoke critically of what they saw as a particularist Western tradition of thought about human rights, and contrasted this with their own non-Western understanding of the term (Asian values). Our view is that the problem of interests in the human rights debate should be taken seriously. The fact that political elites can seek to instrumentalize particular concepts of human rights certainly does not mean that a discussion of the concrete validity of human rights is superfluous. Every right requires interpretation in respect of its validity or applicability in specific situations.

We take the view that every type of society formation in social relations develops in a positive interplay with at least a rudimentary process of community formation, and that society formation can also at the same time bring about or foster 'militant' community-formation processes. The boundaries of such communities need not be identical with those of the society. This is especially noticeable in cases where society formation leads to a loss of identity and/or an endangering of the positions of specific groups; these groups then try even harder to preserve or strengthen their own shared values and traditions. There is therefore both a positive and a negative interplay between community and society formation. Both forms of interplay can also be observed at the international level, in the form of nationalism, fundamentalism, or value-demarcation in the course of global society formation.

On the assumption that there is a close interplay between society formation and community formation we differ sharply from conventional views of a chronological sequence (from traditional to modern) or even of a zero-sum relationship according to which community will be sacrificed on the altar of society. Furthermore, we do not assign community formation to the transnational level and society formation to the international level (like Buzan 1993). Instead, our concept is designed to direct attention to community formation among states as well. This kind of *Vergemeinschaftung* may serve to advance and support global soci-

ety formation (*Vergesellschaftung*), but may also provide a shield against the latter. Since the already existing relations of interdependence make self-exclusion possible only to a limited extent, we can expect a continuing tension between particularist community formation and universalist society formation. In the short term, at least, world society will not be able to provide a substitute for the identity-providing function of societies organized as nation-states.

THE MARCH OF HISTORY?

It should be clear from the argument so far that our concept of world society does not assume that the process thus described is irreversible, and does not imply any one-sided normative evaluation of this process. We take the view that it is inappropriate to commit oneself in advance to a positive or negative assessment of the global society-formation process and "to systematize the changing manifestations of a world entity in a normative way" (Richter 1990: 279). The concept we have developed here is open-ended. In contrast to other concepts (for example Lipschutz 1992: 389 ff, List 1992: 29 ff), it in no way assumes a linear process, but is intended to remain capable of incorporating contradictory tendencies, which may indeed be a reaction to globalization without being *determined* by it (Brock 1993: 163 ff). Nevertheless, the existing degree of inter- and transnational interdependence and institutionalized interaction renders the uncoupling of certain actors from these associative contexts unlikely.

Regarding the normative implications of global society formation, Ferdinand Tönnies, as mentioned above, treats the development from community to society within a general context of cultural pessimism. The latter is echoed in the views of some of the modern communitarians. In contrast, authors like Anthony Giddens or Ulrich Beck are quite optimistic. Beck, for example, sees world society as the only way of solving the global problems of 'risk societies' (Beck 1986: 63). Wolfgang Hein also associates global society with the concrete expectation that it could be the forum in which all kinds of global problems can be solved (Hein 1994: 108). The observation that problems of interdependence can only be dealt with collectively could indeed make people more aware of the need for cooperative action involving state actors and societal actors (Kohler-Koch 1993: 110). But it would be a mistake to conclude that, just because the necessity and certain opportunities are there for every one to see, the latter will automatically be translated into action. From an actor-oriented rather than a functionalist perspective, cooperative problem-solving capability by cooperation is only one among many other possible strategic options. Assuming that states have an interest in themselves they will be very selective gatekeepers when deciding on the admittance of non-state actors to international governance mechanisms (see Wolf in this volume).

For Norbert Elias (1976) humanity's capacity to control its emotions (*Affekt-kontrolle*) is not only constitutive of society, but also forms the core of the civi-

lizing process. The diminishing of violence attributed to this process leads Elias, in contrast to Tönnies, to a positive assessment: violence is something outside civilization, it can only be understood as a relapse. Society formation is connected with control over the emotions with rationalization and an order of interpersonal and intercollective relations resting on cost-benefit calculations. However, Elias posits a close connection between the containment of violence and its monopolization. Such monopolization of power does not exist in world society.

If we follow Elias, the positive effects of world society formation would only appear when the system of states has been overcome. The realization of world society as a new stage in the evolution of human affairs would therefore depend on the formation of a world state. This conclusion points to a weakness in Elias' approach. It is a mistake to equate society formation in the sense of rationalization and control over the emotions with pacification and the diminution of violence. König has formulated this very precisely in his criticism of Senghaas' reception of Elias' theory of civilization: "The increased destructive capacity of the industrial age is the product of modern society, not the product of its regression" (König 1993: 458). It is, says König, the distancing of the individual from the consequences of his/her actions, the operative principle of modern society, which makes possible a moral indifference toward violent action.

A one-sidedly positive evaluation of the civilizing process not only overlooks the ways in which the use of force has been perfected, but also neglects the issue of domination in complex social relations. This criticism applies above all to Bull, who, by omitting any further discussion of the ethical or normative dimension, turns 'order' into a "value without an argument" (Harris 1993: 729). When Bull declares that the order provided by international society is a value that takes precedence over all others, "because it is the condition of the realization of other values" (Bull 1977: 96 ff), he is only describing the inherent potential of this order, which distinguishes it from international anarchy. The ambivalence of the structures of this international order is, as Brown (chapter 5) points out, excluded from consideration by definition as long as the institutions of international society are said to possess a universal attraction that can only be denied by those who do not want to live in peace. Contrary to this glorification, the normative impact of these institutions has to be regarded as much more ambivalent when judged from the perspective of legitimate governance (see the contributions of Zürn and Wolf).

If one were to accept the normative evaluation of societies and of world society that is central to the communitarianism debate (Fowler 1991; Avineri and de-Shalit 1992), the evolution of a world society would be positive if it were accompanied by spreading communal cohesion. A liberal society that relies exclusively on rational arrangements "is fragmentation in practice; and community is the exact opposite, the home of coherence, connection, and normative capacity" (Walzer 1990: 9). Stability, solidarity, and peace would be absent from a world society as long as communal factors are not present to

underpin associative institutions. The community is therefore vital for communitarians in order to anchor norms in a society and to ensure that this society does not turn into something no better than a self-help agency (Taylor 1992: 42). Since it is harder to discern communal elements at the global level than in national societies, the emergence of a just or solidary world society would be unlikely (Purnell 1973: 8).

If we wanted to get beyond the ambivalent associative dimension of world society, we would in fact have to look for a possible normative-ethical foundation for world society. But if we did this, we would be jumping out of the frying pan of moral indifference seen in Bull's analysis ("agnosticism about values," according to Harris 1993: 733) into the fire of the impossible task of constructing a global feeling of community. That this would not lead us far is revealed empirically by the resistance that 'Western universalism' encounters in the rest of the world. The fundamental premises of social psychology rule out the development of a universal collective identity. Global society formation is therefore far from being a process without contradictions. Despite the development of shared interests and their manifestation in common institutions and agreed codes of conduct, and despite the fact that nonstate actors now have more opportunities to become involved, there is a substantial, if concealed, potential for violence in this process. We can at best speak of a rudimentary global feeling of community based on universally recognized ideas (such as the *idea* of human rights). And despite the deficits with regard to legitimacy, processes of policy-making in the emerging world society are also connected with civilizational achievements which open up new opportunities for hedging violence and tackling global problems in a cooperative way.