



WORLD AND PRESS

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Photo: Unsplash

More and more yoga practitioners fear that Indian culture has been 'suppressed by colonisation', while some question its accessibility.

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Photo: Pixabay

It is the people who live and work on plastic rubbish mountains in Africa and across the world who are the invisible backbone of plastic recycling.

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Nationalism is the ideology of our age. No wonder the world is in crisis.

COMMENT At the very moment the world needs to work together, it is being pulled apart, not just by a rising protectionism.

mit Unterrichtsmaterial

By GORDON BROWN*

“THERE IS NO longer such thing as the international community,” a prominent African leader recently complained to me, lamenting that this week’s G20 would, like September’s UN General Assembly, October’s IMF-World Bank meetings, and this month’s COP27, fail to combat the world’s food, energy, debt, inflation, currency, pollution, and poverty crises.

At the very moment the world needs to work together to address global problems that cannot be resolved without global solutions, it is being pulled apart, not just by conflicts but also by a rising protectionism. And while it is not difficult to blame poor leadership, an outdated geopolitics is threatening a decade of perma-crises.

Pillars of the post-Cold War world order are tumbling down as we leave behind the unipolar, hyper-globalised, neoliberal era. Those who try to build the present in the image of the past are finding themselves wholly ill-equipped to meet the challenges of the future. As Mohamed El-Erian and Michael Spence have written, we need new models for growth, national economic management, and global cooperation.

No one can deny the significance of the emergence of new power around the world, the

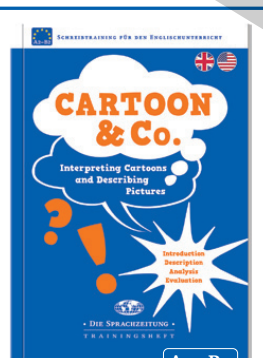


G7 leaders pose for a photo with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at a NATO summit in July 2023. | PHOTO: NurPhoto/Getty Images

growing importance of services and the digital economy at the expense of manufacturing, the education-rich and education-poor divide that is replacing the old manual/non-manual divide, and the serious, existential threats to our planet. No growth model can meet the needs of the 21st century without incorporating rising concerns about environmental and economic equity and re-evaluating the role of finance. And the manufacturing-led, export-driven, low-wage models of development that until recently served every industrialising country are being overtaken not just by demographic shifts but by technological advances that mean more goods can be manufactured by a markedly smaller workforce. All this is determining the seismic shifts in our geopolitics. First, as we move from a unipolar to a multipolar world, no single country – no matter the size of

its military or economy – has the power to command and control us, only the power to propose and persuade. Second, there is now no consensus that open markets benefit all. The hyper-globalisation of the last 30 years is not giving way to de-globalisation, or even slowbalisation, but lowbalisation: a globalisation-lite defined by near-shoring, friend-shoring, and shortening supply chains. Policies promoting privatisation, deregulation, and liberalisation, which became popularly known as the Washington Consensus, now have few supporters – even in Washington. Most important of all, nationalism has replaced neoliberalism as the dominant ideology of the age. If, for the past 30 years, economics drove political decision-making, now politics is determining economic decisions, with country after country vying

industry, and competition policies. The win-win economics of mutually beneficial commerce is being replaced by the zero-sum rivalries of “I win, you lose” as movements such as “America First”, “China First”, “India First”, and “Russia First” – “My Tribe First” – threaten to descend into an us versus them geopolitics of “my country first and only”. And with national security establishments now freezing the central bank reserves of hostile regimes and limiting access to global payments systems, trade, technology, and capital wars are set to intensify. The one hopeful sign of cooperation is NATO unity over Ukraine. But this should not blind us to the scale of global disunity, with almost all of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East standing aloof from sanctions against Russia and even condemnation of its war crimes.



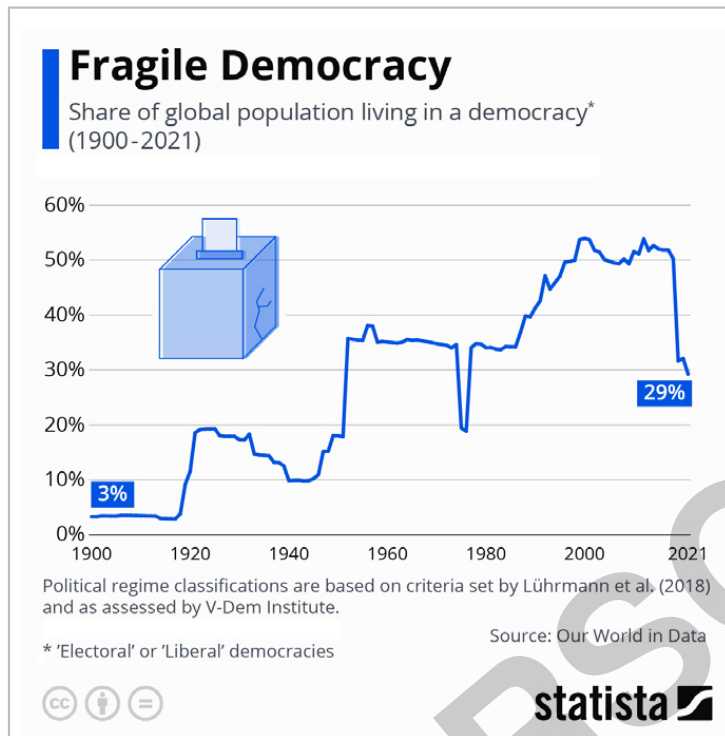
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A2-B2

COMMENT

It's time to build a global pro-democracy movement

DEMOCRACY If a diminished civil society is the foundation of autocracy, a robust and inclusive civil society is the bedrock of democracy.



By YORDANOS EYOEL AND HAHRIE HAN*

DEMOCRACY does not disappear by accident. Instead, all over the world, we are witnessing deliberate attempts by antidemocratic actors to weaken civil society, cripple the rule of law, and activate social fragmentation. From weaponizing fear to re-writing history to exploiting religion, today's autocrats and their supporters leverage the same playbook. At the heart of that playbook is a multipronged attack on civil society. In 2021, among the 33 autocratizing countries, repression of civil society worsened in 22. If a diminished civil society is the foundation of autocracy, a robust and inclusive civil society is the bedrock of democracy. Civil society serves as an intermediary between the state and the individual, composed of organizations such as schools and universities, nonprofit and advocacy groups, professional associations, churches, and

is the connective tissue that holds any society together. It is no accident that anti-democratic actors start there. Despite the centrality of civil society to the authoritarian playbook, efforts to strengthen democracy too often underinvest in civil society – even though it is our best line of defense. Civil society organizations in both democracies and autocratic regimes are hamstrung by limited resources and lack of coordination. Even in the United States, with the world's most sophisticated philanthropic culture, civil society organizations defending and strengthening democracy are grossly underfunded compared to organizations working on education, health, or poverty alleviation. For instance, in 2020, U.S. philanthropists spent \$71 billion on education, whereas decade-long philanthropic funding of democracy organizations totaled about \$14 billion. This pattern of overinvesting in issue areas and underinvesting in governance is reflected in how the U.S.

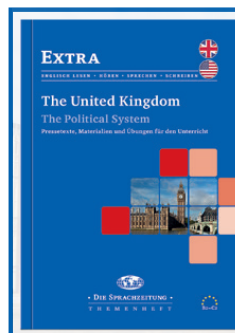
government has allocated its funding globally. For example, in Africa, the U.S. government spends 70 percent of its funds (\$5.4 billion) on health initiatives and only 4 percent (\$312.4 million) on democracy, human rights, and governance. Because civil society is inherently decentralized, sometimes it can be hard to know how to strategically invest in it. Investments in civil society may not seem as significant as sweeping institutional and policy reforms, such

as H.R. 1 in the United States. Or, because civil life involves the messy work of bringing people together, efforts to strengthen it may seem unpredictable relative to individually targeted psychological interventions, such as traditional or social media ads to incentivize action. It doesn't have to be so. We can and must develop a strategic approach to shoring up and inoculating civil society against attempts to weaken it. The first part of the solution to protect and strengthen democracy is to prioritize funding democracy issues and organizations. The second is to invest these resources strategically in civil society. We propose two immediate priorities. Build civic resilience: In the U.S. and internationally, there is an overinvestment in short-term outcomes, in pursuit of a silver-bullet electoral or policy win (the 2020 U.S. elections cost a whopping \$14 billion). While leadership and structural reforms are important to strengthening democracy, we also need civil society organizations that cultivate a shared commitment to democratic values and build resilience among individuals and communities to advance those values. Funding for civil society organizations that are tirelessly building the culture of democracy and social cohesion through approaches such as civics education, community organizing, leadership development, and facilitating deliberative dialogue for inclusive democracy should be prioritized alongside those working on structural reforms.

Facilitate transnational pro-democracy coordination: As the Freedom House warns, "the global order is nearing a tipping point, and if democracy's defenders do not work together to help guarantee freedom for all people, the authoritarian model will prevail." Today, pro-democracy organizations are siloed, lacking the level of transnational coordination and playbook-sharing that their autocratic counterparts artfully orchestrate. We need to create forums, such as the upcoming virtual Global Democracy Champions Summit, to weave global networks and elevate the aspirations, leadership, and innovations of pro-democracy organizations, activists, academics, and philanthropists. From journalists to think tanks to Ukrainian freedom fighters, there is outcry for resources and innovation to defend liberal democracy. In the same way philanthropic institutions, governments, and multilateral institutions galvanized in response to COVID-19, this is the moment to rise in global solidarity for democracy. Philanthropy, in particular, has a historic role to play by making bold investments in civil society organizations, addressing both short-term crises as well as long-term civic infrastructure building efforts.

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Waste pickers scavenge for recyclables at a dumpsite in Kenya. | PHOTO: James Wakibia/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

‘We are the backbone of recycling’

PLASTIC After a childhood on the dump, John Chweya wants to ensure rights are enshrined in UN plastic pollution treaty.

By SANDRA LAVILLE

AS A BOY, John Chweya was one of many children who scrambled over the mountain of stinking waste at Kachok dump, using a magnet that he dangled over the rubbish to pull out metal scraps and earn a living. Over the years since, global companies such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Nestlé have increased plastic production by millions of metric tonnes, and plastic bottles have replaced metal as the source of income for those who pick through the garbage in Kisumu, the third-largest city in Kenya.

Today, in the multimillion-pound plastic industry, it is the people who live and work on rubbish mountains in Africa and across the world who are the invisible backbone of plastic recycling and enable multinational companies to meet their targets to reduce its use.

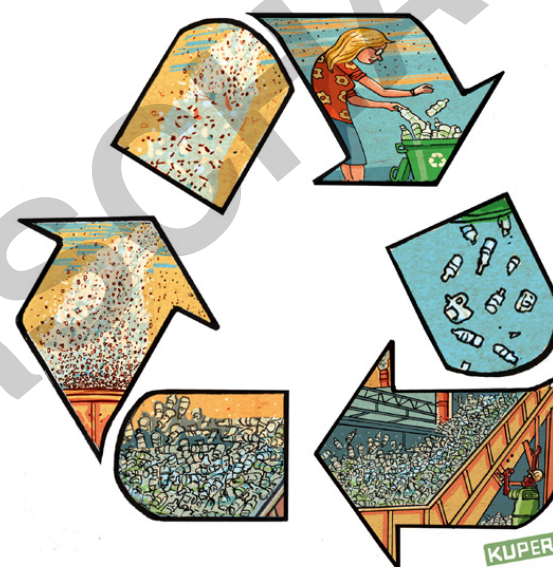
According to the United Nations Environmental Assembly, 60% of the plastic recycled across the world is collected by waste pickers like Chweya. But they are ghost workers: unrecognised, unprotected, and discriminated against. With no ability to access healthcare, they succumb to infections, lung diseases, and cancer from living amid toxic waste, inhaling smoke from burning plastic, and scraping a living in some of the worst conditions pos-

“There were a lot of children my age at the dump when I started going there. Some of them were sleeping there in makeshift houses they had built,” said Chweya. “Most of those friends of mine from the dump died, some were killed in accidents, and some died from sickness. I remember all their names.”

Perhaps it is those names Chweya carried with him in an incredible journey over 20 years that has taken him from a childhood on the waste dump to the discussion rooms of the UN, driven by a passion to ensure the rights of waste pickers across the world are put front and centre of the global treaty to fight plastic pollution.

This month in Paris, Chweya will sit alongside representatives of world leaders as the gritty details of the UN treaty to tackle plastic pollution are hammered out. Chweya, who now leads the Waste Pickers Association of Kenya, representing 36,000 collectors, has been instrumental in pushing countries to recognise the world’s 20 million waste pickers in the treaty. He wants justice for collectors, as well as healthcare, a proper income, and better working conditions, to be included in the treaty.

“As someone who has experienced the deep inequalities and social injustices that waste pickers suffer not just in Kenya but across the world, being part of



Recycled Plastic Recycled Pollution. | CARTOON: Peter Kuper, PoliticalCartoons.com

this is a very historic moment,” said Chweya. “We have been literally the backbone of collection and recycling systems in the world, and one of the things I know for sure is that the treaty must be for the people who have been on frontline of fighting this global problem of plastic pollution. It is a matter of life for us. We have already died and are still dying, so I want to make sure that the role and contribution of waste pickers is not taken for granted.” Richard Gower, a senior associate for economics and policy at the international NGO Tearfund, which provides advocacy support to Chweya, said: “When the treaty was first discussed, most people thought plastic pollution was an environmental problem,

rather than a human problem. There is increasing recognition now of the human problem: the impact on the 20 million people involved in collecting plastic from streets and dumps and the 2 billion people in the world who do not have regular bin collections, which results in huge amounts of plastic being dumped, and the health impacts of that pollution.” In the years Chweya has worked as a waste picker, he has come up against discrimination, death, and lack of dignity. “I had to start picking because my family’s life changed overnight when there was a fire at the market where my mum sold the secondhand clothes which were our main income. From then on, every sin-

try and earn money. So I started looking for metals to sell from the waste in the streets and the dump. I used a magnet tied to a rope and hung it over the rubbish to attract the metal. For each kilogram of metal I sold to a dealer, I would get five Kenyan shillings – that is like, in dollars, \$0.03.”

For a while, Chweya was able to attend primary school, where the parents of his friends shunned him. “They did not let their children play with me. They called us thokora, which is a Swahili word for someone who eats from a bin,” he said.

As he grew up, Chweya, who was better educated than most of those living on the meagre money earned by sifting through rubbish, began to organise his friends in Kisumu. With organisation came more power and a stronger voice, which he used to challenge the county government on its policies. “We were doing the job that the municipal government was supposed to be doing, but no one was engaging with us. They saw us as illiterate and uneducated, and for a very long time, they did not understand the livelihoods of waste pickers,” he said. “It was not until we started to engage with them that they started to see us properly.”

Chweya began to build local cooperatives of waste pickers, boosted initially by a county government grant of 40,000 Kenyan shillings (£230). In Kisumu, he is now part of a group who bargain collectively and pool their earnings. “We are collecting more plastic, and because we have a stronger voice now, we are negotiating directly with agents and sometimes with the recycling companies,” he said. ...

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Environmental activists protest outside the International Maritime Organization in July 2023.
| PHOTO: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

Global shipping industry faces headwinds over going green

BUSINESS • ENVIRONMENT

Ocean transport contributes about three percent of humankind's greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to the output of Germany.

By WILLIAM BOOTH

IN A CLUBBY mid-rise on the River Thames, its lobby filled with models of container ships and oil tankers, a rather obscure United Nations group is gathering this week to make a momentous decision that will influence whether the world can meet its promise to limit perilous global warming.

The meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the U.N. body responsible for regulating shipping on the seas, opened on Monday, attended by delegates from 175 governments, who are set for a sharp debate over how ambitious they will be in slashing future greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime sector.

The shipping industry – vital for trade, but fiscally conservative; international, but greatly influenced by a small number of magnates in a handful of countries – plays an outside role in climate change. It is traditionally a dirty sector, as most boats burn a heavy fuel oil.

About 90 percent of the world's trade travels by ship – a ceaseless movement of 60,000 vessels

billions of goods each year. Essentially, almost every import in a modern American home and garage arrives by boat – cars, appliances, furniture, clothes – and, increasingly, a lot of the food in the kitchen, too, like frozen burgers from Argentina or green bananas from Colombia.

Ocean transport contributes about three percent of humankind's greenhouse gas emissions. While that number might not seem like much, if the shipping sector were a country, it would be Germany – and among the top ten polluters.

At the IMO meeting, the United States is leading the charge by “high ambition” countries to hold future warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) – to stave off dramatic sea level rise and other perils. The Biden administration is pressing the shipping sector to go green.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, alongside China and Brazil, have generally advocated a slower approach – either because they are major fuel exporters or a developing country opposed to measures that could hinder global trade. Also, change costs money – by the shipper or the buyer.

Previously, the IMO committed world shipping to a 50 percent reduction in warming gas emissions by 2050 – far too little, according to the current scientific consensus. The Biden administration wants shippers to reach a 37 percent reduction in emissions by 2030; followed by 96 percent by 2040; and 100 percent by 2050. The Americans said they were “cautiously optimistic” the IMO would be more ambitious. But some delegations are clearly opposed to high targets and want to set lower goals – say, a 20 percent reduction in emissions by 2030. They also want the targets to be squishier – “indicative checkpoints,” for example, vs. “levels of ambition.”

Senior U.S. officials, briefing reporters before the meeting, said the 2030 goals are achievable using “off the shelf” technologies. Even so, those changes would be pretty dramatic.

One solution that seemed almost science fiction a few years ago may soon become commonplace as cargo vessels are outfitted with “sails” mounted on their decks. These won't be traditional canvas managed by ropes but could be giant kites, spinning rotors, or telescoping hard sails – think of a folding airplane wing – that harness wind power to propel the vessel.

The first cargo ships are deploying these technologies on sea trials now. The 235-meter ‘Shofu Maru,’ a coal carrier running between Australia, Japan, and North America, will test out its rigid sail and is expected to reduce emissions by five to eight percent on the journey with a wind assist. A French company called Airseas, which is piloting a huge kite called Seawing to pull a cargo ship along, traveling between France and the United

States, claims it can reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 20 percent.

If new climate goals are adopted by the IMO this week, we could also soon see voluntary speed limits out in the oceans. Modern cargo vessels capable of doing 25 knots or more may be “slow-steaming” at half that speed. Slower ships burn less fuel and emit less carbon dioxide. But slower ships also mean that to meet global demand for transport, the size of the shipping fleet will grow.

Other near-term technologies include better route planning, perhaps aided by artificial intelligence, and better design. One idea is to reduce the resistance between the ship's hull and seawater by using air bubbles. Experiments are underway.

To meet the 2040 and 2050 goals, the industry will need to transition to alternative shipping fuels, such as ammonia and green hydrogen. The new fuels will require massive investment – new engines, new port infrastructure, and a steady supply of fuels.

IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim spoke with ‘The Washington Post’ and other news outlets at the meeting. He said that in addition to technological fixes, the maritime industry must consider a carbon levy on ships that would fund action in the developing world. He called it “vital” to helping poorer countries, which also rely on shipping, ports, and sea trade. ...

António Guterres, secretary general of the United Nations, on Monday urged the IMO to do more. “Humanity is in dangerous waters on climate. But the decisions you take over the coming days could help us chart a safer course. Science tells us it is still possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius,” he told delegates in a video statement. While Guterres acknowledged that “the industry has seen some progress,” he said it “must move much faster to get on track and drive investment and innovation.”

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Climate Change – noch ist es nicht zu spät



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