Central Arguments
The author’s main contention is to promote the formation of a new World Parliament and to criticize the legitimacy of the current European Union and United Nations.

The conditions for the new World Parliament would be as follows:
1. All of its members need to be directly elected.
   BUT: How could this be done in countries that do not allow their people to vote for their own national government freely?
2. The parliament’s own powers must be strictly limited, devolving power to the smallest appropriate political unit, and by restricting its capacity for executive action.
3. The private funding of elections is prohibited.
4. The use of party whips to force representatives into line is also prohibited.
   BUT: These conditions are not practical given the world that we live in. It would be hard to impose these regulations on a global level.

Main Ideas and Supporting Evidence for the Need of Reform
Those countries (G8) who claim to lead the world economically and politically were never granted their powers by the rest of the world. They simply appointed themselves.

In addition, the five permanent veto-members of the UN Security Council only represent a small portion of the world’s population according to the outcome of WWII 50 years ago. They pursue their national interests rather than world interests.

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund apportion votes according to the amounts lenders provide. Economic powerful countries govern these institutions but don't let them dictate their own affairs.

Many of the WTO’s decisions are made in secret and without the consent of those affected. Rich nations tend to have more representation than the poorer nations at the WTO meetings.

READING: Toward a Global Parliament (2001) by Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss

Acronyms
1. WTO- World Trade Organization
2. IMF- International Monetary Fund
3. WEF- World Economic Forum
4. NGO- Non-Governmental Organization
5. UN- United Nations
Challenging the Democratic Deficit
The lack of citizen interest in global organizations has become a problem for many aspects of globalization. Bill Clinton, the secretary-general of the UN, the director-general of the WTO, the managing director of the IMF, and the president of the World Bank have all called for an increase in citizen participation in international concerns.

It has also become difficult to create a democratic international system. Separate parties attempt to implement their own ideas of persuasion, which creates a problem for the intended system to exist. A democratic system does not allow for unelected interest groups to represent citizens as a whole.

Decision-making goes Global
Many issues concerning global policy that are introduced by the international governmental system are currently affecting citizens lives. Through this system, the globalized economy has allowed for the rise of economic inequality with a lax attempt to lower poverty levels.

Civil Societies Global Presence
Civil society has independently, through nonprofit organizations, attempted to position itself as a prevailing force within the international system. It has formed treaties, fought to end debt among some of the poorest countries, and fought to establish an international criminal court, to just name a few of the activities some groups are engaged in. Even when conservative influence resulted in the end that states prevailed in most cases, NGO's continue to remain an influential part of international actors.

Corporate Movers
Business and banking leaders have become an instrumental part of the international system. Organizations like the WEF have provided forums for discussion and recommendations on global policies. These groups provide support and assistance to markets and governments all over the world.

Pondering a Global Parliament
Civil society and the corporate and banking communities are not unified, and their separateness makes it difficult for them to work together in global governance. Since the international system attempts to have a democratic agenda, those whose policies get rejected may question the validity of the system. But the conjoining ranks of citizens and the business and corporate elite may be able to negotiate policies that are acceptable for all parties.

All those in favor
Citizen organizations would be more likely support democratic solutions while much of the business elite would support it as a tool in closing the democratic deficit. These groups would most likely accept a global parliament which is open and democratic.

Making it happen
A new diplomacy is needed to create a union between civil society and state governments. One way to achieve this would be for supportive states to help civil society in creating a new democratic world assembly. Another way to achieve this goal would be to rely on a treaty, which
would influence negotiations. Demand for global democratization may increase as citizen and corporate groups recognize the benefits of its existence.


A Brief History of Corporate versus Citizen Power under the UN

NGO’s such as the NAACP, AFL-CIO, women’s groups, and human rights groups were involved in negotiations over drafting the original UN charter.

An agreement, which wasn’t voted on, was approved in 1947 by the UN general assembly between the UN and the IMF, and the UN and the World Bank. This act would eventually affect the balance of power governments, corporations, and civil society.

In 1994, Erskine Childers, a former UN high official, noted that the UN founders had not intended for the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) to control macroeconomic policy but that the ECOSOC were to decide these matters.

Childers argued that BWI’s restricted UN participation while BWI’s took part in ECOSOC as well as UN agency meetings. In other words, corporate rights superseded universal citizens rights.

Disconnect promotes Global Disaster

Disconnect is the result of lack of coordination between the BWI’s and the UN. These results are evident in many of the global crises of the present. BWI’s have created a system that allows large corporations to influence governments, which can lead to an increase in environmental destruction and poverty.

Undermining the UN’s original mandate and Authority: The Global Compact

Under the UN system, there is currently a set of human rights, labor rights, and environmental protections. Governments have approved these rights many years ago, however, they’ve often failed to implement them. Secretary General Kofi Annan issued a collection of principles called the Global Compact, which is an agreement between the UN and some of the world’s largest corporations to coordinate their actions. Critics of the Global Compact believe that it ignores the original mandate of the UN.

READING: Ten Ways to Democratize the Global Economy (2000) by Deborah James

Central argument: Citizens can and should play an active role in shaping the future of our global economy. Ten ways to achieve this:

1. No Globalization without representation
2. Mandate corporate responsibility; corporations have greater rights and representation than individual citizens; corporations should be subject to the people’s will
3. Restructuring of global financial architecture is needed; global speculation market moves over 1.5 trillion $ daily; countries should implement capital controls
4. Cancel all debt, end structural adjustment and defend economic sovereignty; debt destroys poor nations’ ability to develop
Prioritize human rights: include economic rights in trade agreements; UN should be the strongest multilateral body

Promote sustainable development—not consumption—as the key to progress; global trade should not undermine the ability of each nation, state or local community

Integrate women’s needs in all economic restructuring; women are half the world population but hold less than five percent of positions of power who determine global economic policy; women own only 1 percent of global property

Build free and strong labor unions internationally and domestically; labor unions are still restricted from organizing in many countries; International Labor Organization (ILO) should have reinforcement power: U.S. should set example of enforcing worker’s rights to organize

Develop community control over capital; promote socially responsible investment; address local needs first

promote fair trade, not free trade; operate from grassroots (local farmers and manufacturers provide goods); reject corporate chain stores

READING: The Last Word—Family, Community, Democracy (1996) by Jerry Mauder and Edward Goldsmith

Edward Goldsmith argues that the development of a global economy has actively sought to replace community-based economies, thereby contributing to social strains such as poverty, homelessness, deviance, and environmental decay—problems which were hitherto successfully managed by these same local communities. Under pressure from TNC’s, governments participating in the World Trade Organization (WTO) who have signed the Uruguay Round of GATT have accelerated the globalization process in largely localized economies, despite resulting social grievances.

Replacement of the Social Economy
- The state and corporations now fulfill the functions of the family, such as the production of food and performance of religious ceremonies.
- State and corporations have thus replaced what is referred to as the local non-waged, non-monetarized, non-market social economy.
- Replacing the social economy has resulted in the deterioration of formerly non-monetarized functions of child rearing, healthcare, education, and care of the infirm and elderly.
- The state and corporations control even nature’s critical functions, such as nitrogen fixation.

Community Disintegration
- The nuclear family unit has replaced the extended family, existing as a separate entity in a largely indifferent society.
- The concepts of family and community have become right-wing slogans, though they formed the greater part of the human cognitive experience.
- The family and community hitherto shaped morality and behavior through extended public opinion.
- The replacement of the community has resulted in social grievances such as crime, drug addiction, and alcoholism as products of ‘liberation’ from local gossip.
Community and Democracy
- Since, a true democracy is “by the people, for the people”, the current structure of the government – where the voting power of the people is limited to every couple of years - is not a democracy.
- A true democracy can only be dealt with at the communal level, where local communes have the decision making power which directly reflects the interests of the people.
- The GATT Uruguay Round and the WTO have delegated their economic affairs to an international bureaucracy which is distant from the interests and concerns of locales. Instead it is subservient to the global economy which is designed to serve the interests of the TNC’s.

Self Sufficiency
- Globalization is directly in opposition to local self sufficiency.
- Local self sufficiency involves the management of natural resources. Only they are in possession of the knowledge and capacities of living in their space.
- Modernization of agriculture in the Third World – subsistence systems which already make optimal use of local resources – has led to exploitation and destruction of the land.
- The community must be understood as the human species in addition to the local neighborhood of humans, including the land, the water, and the plant and animal life.
- Thus, there must be a reversion to the community based economy which caters to a local market in order to reduce the environmental impact of globalization.

The Inevitable Breakdown of the Global Economy
- The great takeover by globalization cannot proceed indefinitely.
- The global economy has led to environmental concerns such as the Greenhouse effect which it can not resolve without a local infrastructure.
- The state cannot provide welfare to all citizens in need, especially the mentally ill - a role formerly assumed by local communities.
- The state cannot provide food and material goods – a need formerly met through jobs, which have been drastically reduced by globalization.
- World Bank structural adjustment programs have greatly reduced the buying power of even employed citizens, thereby marginalizing not only local people, but the entire global system itself.
- There is an immediate need for the localization of the economy, which can be gradually achieved through programs such as LETS, Time Dollar, and Community Supported Agriculture.
- In conclusion, Goldsmith advocates the replacement of the global economy - one controlled by the interests of a largely ‘non-democratic’ government and big business - by economic localization. Such localization, according to Goldsmith, can effectively return the power of economic and social self-sufficiency to the community, thereby reinstating a true democracy. He forecasts such localization of economies occurring not only through mass revolts against the exploitation of the community, but through small scale initiatives.

Questions:
1. Is Goldsmith suffering from a case of ‘the grass is always greener on the other side?’ Does his argument lack convincing statistical data concerning the true economic and social condition of localized economies?
2. Are Goldsmith’s assertions of a localized economy realistic, when in fact, the nature of things is to move forward rather than backwards? Though in an agricultural society such a proposition may be possible, is it feasible in a largely industrial nation, where every
Wal-Mart (and not just one) must supposedly be dismantled to return economic power to the people?

3. What are the social and political implications of returning to a communal system? Certain characteristics of such communities are closely related to this idea of localization - for example, the status of women.

4. How can a local economy function in major cities like New York, where the entire behavioral and ideological premise of existence is seemingly a need for individual identity?