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How do you think these world affairs (the IR of this day and age) are manifest in yourself?

The question to what degree current international relations are part of me or my construction of “self” seems to be easy to answer at first sight, but proves more complex upon closer analysis.

Undoubtly, international relations, as a phenomena of an increasingly globalized world in which I live, play a significant role in my life and are the determining factor for why I am writing this briefing paper at this moment. Without the international relations and networks an university student as me can use over the course of his tertiary studies at this stage of world’s history, I would not be where I am today and chances are that I would also not be what I am today.

Prior to my arrival in New Zealand I had the chance to spend three weeks in Tanzania as part of an cultural exchange organized by my German university, a local school and their counterparts in Mzumbe, Tanzania, which probably impacted my global understanding more than this stay in New Zealand ever will or my year at an US High School in 1995-1996 ever has, even though the duration of my stay in Tanzania was relatively short by comparison. But the common fact about all my stays in different countries, whether for the purpose of studies or leisure time, is that they all affected my “self” and my understanding of global issues. This conclusion also shows that my “self” is in constant transition and that I, as a person, am by no means able to communicate how world affairs are manifested in myself on much more than a day-to-day basis.

It is therefore only possible to describe how world affairs, or international relations, manifest themselves in my “self” at the current time, or, relating to the question asked, on this day. Consequently, it is absolutely impossible to predict how the manifestation of international relations in relation to my “self” will play out over the course of our current age, as unpredictable events such as 9/11 can have an immediate and long-lasting impact on my perceived construct of the world, at least when I “pull up and away from the mass that is society in which (I) am embedded”, as I am constantly trying to do, being the result of the kind of modernist socialisation in a western country that I am.

A general answer to the question of how world affairs are manifest in my “self” could be that the mixture of my by no means static cultural background, open-minded upbringing and the opportunities a more and more globalized world has to offer to (at least seen from a global point of view) privileged people as me, have turned me into a very sensitive and interested person concerning global matters, even though my open-mindedness for international affairs and relations might not be a one-way-street, as I believed when I was younger. I think that the past few years have shown very clearly that exaggerated expectations in regard to a globalized and peaceful world might not only be premature, but impossible to fulfil in any case. The verdict on whether my manifestation of international relations or world affairs will be increasingly positive, negative or unchanged, whether in the short or in the long term, is still out and seems unpredictable.