

Introduction: Governing the World?

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Financial and economic crisis, the threats from disease pandemics, preventing climate change, and protecting individuals from violence, amongst many other things, all seem to require some form of global co-operation: some attempt to manage, regulate, and control these issues and processes that threaten states, economies, societies and individuals. In some ways this is not novel. The idea that global actors ought to find ways to deal with common challenges has been a long-standing argument within international relations, and there are some important historical examples where forms of institutionalised co-operation have been developed. But in the contemporary period there seems to be a growth in the number of these challenges as a result of both the increasing integration of the global economy and the growing significance of new kinds of actors on the world stage. The on-going global financial crisis demonstrates this very clearly.

In recent years it has become commonplace to label efforts to manage these issues forms of 'global governance.' While the term has become very popular in the academic study of international politics and in international public policy circles, there are intense disputes about what it might mean, what is involved in it, whether it really works, and, in the end, what we should make of it. Is global governance something to be embraced as the best solution to global problems in a complex global age, or something to be feared as it erodes state sovereignty and privileges some actors and some values above others?

This book makes no pretence to have provided any simple answers to these questions. What it does do is bring together a series of essays that explore the different ways in which events, issues and processes are managed, regulated and controlled in contemporary international politics, in the belief that a collection of this kind provides some necessary material for reflecting on these larger questions. The rest of this introduction tries to provide some background and context for the case studies that follow. It looks at the rise of global governance as both a term of academic and international public policy debate, at what might be meant by the term and at some of the questions that arise when we start to think about its significance in contemporary international politics.

The rise of 'global governance'

Within the academic study of international politics 'global governance' has become something of a growth industry. There are now lots of research centers, academic programs and courses dedicated to the topic (including some of our own courses from which the impetus for this book springs). This interest in global governance is also relatively new. A quick search of the British Library catalogue reveals that the earliest book with the term in the title was published in 1993. From 1993 to 1997 only 33 more were recorded in the catalogue. From 1997-2001 that figure is 56; from 2001-2005 it is 132; from 2005-2009 it is 176; and 155 books are recorded from 2009 to the present (spring 2012). A similar search of the Library of Congress catalogues reveals a similar trend: 7 books from 1990-1993, 32 from 1993-1997, 103 from 1997-2001, 245 from 2001-2005, 532 from 2005-2009, and 533 from 2009-present. That the term only really entered into academic discourse in the early 1990s is confirmed by other developments during this period: the publication in 1992 of the first significant academic book that explored the concept (James Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel's *Governance without Government*) and the founding in 1995 of the academic journal, *Global Governance* (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992).

Concern about global governance is not limited to the academy of course. It seems fair to say that the recent global financial and economic crisis has intensified interest among international policy-makers in how global processes, events and flows are to be better managed and regulated. This is more than just rhetoric. There has been a growing consensus, at least among western states, that they really ought to design mechanisms for managing processes that affect their common interests - even if there is also a recognition that it is hard to do so. The 1995 Commission on Global Governance report, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, argued that changes in the global situation made it imperative to improve arrangements for the governance of international affairs (Commission on Global Governance 1995). These changes included economic globalization, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, civil conflict, persistent poverty, and environmental change. Most importantly it argued that growing interdependence meant that individual states were less and less able to deal with these challenges on their own—thus the need for forms of co-operative management and the linking of states and non-state actors together in regimes of governance. This basic sentiment is one that has been repeated by many other politicians and global policymakers. In 2011, for example, the President of the UN General Assembly said that 'the world today is getting more interdependent and more integrated. Problems cross borders without asking for passports and visas. Information spreads instantly all over the globe. It is no longer possible to ignore what is happening abroad. Global challenges require co-ordinated and concerted action of

the international community' (Diess 2011). This kind of sentiment has been nicely summed by Mark Duffield as 'the will to govern': the desire on the part of western states and global policymakers to impose an order on international events and processes, especially those that are thought to create 'challenges' for western states (Duffield 2001).

The problem of getting *states* to agree collectively to deal with global problems is a familiar one to students of international politics, but the creation of regimes of global governance it is not limited to this. Issues such as climate change and global poverty have engendered considerable interest among campaigning groups, NGOs and individual citizens in promoting a better global response to these kinds of problems. And a key problem for designing mechanisms of global governance is about the need to generate the participation of individuals, communities, faiths, genders, families, businesses and a host of collective endeavors and identities in the governance of global problems. Similarly, global governance is not only about getting states to respond to challenges but changing the behavior of individuals and communities whether in regard to their consumption patterns, sexual practice, eating habits, or neighbourliness in a way that addresses common global problems.

Translating commitment to global governance into practice has not been straightforward, and there is no simple causal line from an argument for the necessity for new regimes of governance to their implementation in practice. But it is also true that since the mid-1990s there has been a proliferation of new regimes of governance emerging in international politics and the further development of existing regimes. Examples of the former include the Kimberley process for controlling the export and sale of 'blood diamonds,' the Kyoto Protocol, and efforts to control the use of land mines. Examples of the latter include, most obviously the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but also the strengthening of the global anti-money laundering regime. All this has led to the contemporary situation in which the establishment of practices of governance is seen as the answer to a host of problems in international politics—from climate change to small arms and from infectious diseases to global financial turmoil.

What's in a name?

All this academic and practical interest in global governance, however, has not necessarily led to any great clarity about what, exactly, might be meant by the term (Dingwerth and Pattberg: 2006). One reason for this is that both component parts of the term are disputed. 'Global' implies a geographic reach that many regimes of governance simply do not have (and some of which do not

aspire to). However the term 'global' also implies something more than just geography. It at least suggests something about participation in the construction of regimes of governance—that many (all?) states have some kind of say, with the obvious counter that in many cases it is the dominant states who in fact wield significant power in the construction of regimes of governance. 'Global' might also refer to something about the benefits that flow from regimes of governance: one of the justifications for global governance has been that states have *common* interests in resolving global problems. Yet it is also clear that regimes of governance often benefit some states more than others, and some (trade for example) have been regularly criticized for producing benefits that accrue disproportionately to the more powerful states. If regimes of governance are neither global in reach, nor the result of wide participation, nor beneficial to large numbers of states, then the term 'global' may be inappropriate at best and downright disingenuous at worst. This in turn has led to a distinctive sub-set of arguments about the legitimacy of arrangements for global governance and the extent to which they ought to be more equitable and/or accountable (Held 1995; Falk 2000).

The term 'governance' is perhaps even more problematic. Some of this has to do with the fact that the term is a rather archaic one. Some of it has to do with the fact that it is appended to other words—'good', 'multi-level', 'European', and so on—from which some single or straightforward definition is hard to establish. And some of it has to do with distinguishing 'governance' from other things: government, regulation, management, order, law and so on. This has led Lawrence Finkelstein to argue that 'we say "governance" because we don't really know what is going on' (Finkelstein 1995: 368). These difficulties have not stopped academics and policymakers from trying to define the term. The Commission on Global Governance defined governance as:

the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions have either agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.

(Commission on Global Governance 1995: 4)

James Rosenau argued that global governance should be conceived so as to:

include systems of rule at all levels of human activity - from the family to the international organization - in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions ... Governance ... encompasses the activities of governments, but it also includes the many other channels through which 'commands' flow in the form of goals framed, directives issued and policies pursued.

(Rosenau 1995: 13-14)

Thomas Weiss has argued that 'many academics and international practitioners employ "governance" to connote a complex set of structures and processes, both public and private' (Weiss 2000: 795).

Some common themes emerge from these definitions. Two seem particularly important. The first is that global governance involves an often-complex relationship between public authorities (states and formal international organizations) and private authorities and organisations (NGOs, transitional activist groups, standard setting bodies, and businesses). As Rosenau has argued, 'global governance refers to more than the formal institutions and organizations through which the management of international affairs is or is not sustained. The United Nations system and national governments are surely central to the conduct of global governance, but they are only part of the picture' (Rosenau 1995: 13). Second, and following from this, the mechanisms through which governance is exercised are a complex set of legal and coercive practices and other more informal mechanisms such as voluntary agreements, codes of conduct and 'naming and shaming.' International law is obviously central to global governance as either a normative tool, a form of disciplinary 'new constitutionalism,' or a primitive legal system (Slaughter 1993; Gill 2005; Bull 1977). But even here it is the case that international law provides the basis upon which other mechanisms of governance work, by highlighting non-compliance and mobilizing campaigning groups. In both of these ways practices of global governance are complex in the sense that they often involve a variety of actors and mechanisms. It is this kind of complexity that is usually thought to be the distinguishing feature of contemporary regimes of global governance and which provides some way of distinguishing it from other related terms.

Global Governance and History

Even if we can define what global governance means, this does not get us very far in answering the question of how we should understand its significance as an analytical concept or an empirical reality. In tackling these questions several new kinds of difficulties immediately present

themselves. The first relates precisely to the novelty of the term. The relatively recent academic use of 'global governance' suggests that something importantly new is going on in international politics. And some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the emergence of global governance is transforming the character of international politics—generating a new form of global order (Slaughter 2004). The history of international politics, however, shows that the idea that global processes ought to be better managed is an old one, and for some scholars the collective need to form governance arrangements is nothing new. Viewed in this light, the period from the 1990s is simply an acceleration of something that had been happening since the nineteenth century with the growth of industrialization, spread of disease, and need to maintain peace in Europe.

The idea that significant efforts ought to be made to better manage international issues goes back at least to the Enlightenment arguments about the need to control war and establish free trade. Famously Kant argued in 'Idea for a Universal History,' that 'the problem of establishing a perfect civil constitution is subordinate to the problem of a law-governed external relationship with other states,' and much of liberal international thought subsequently has been convinced that the security of liberalism domestically requires various forms of international reform (Kant 1970a: 46). In Kant's brief remarks about Barbary pirates for example, whose actions were 'contrary to the right of nature,' there is some indication that distant places ought be the object of reform (Kant 1970b: 106). It was not really until the nineteenth century that more systematic efforts were made to regulate and manage international issues. The ending of piracy on the Barbary Coast, the ending of the transatlantic slave trade, and through the middle of the 19th century, the spread of free-trade agreements, are some obvious examples. Through the first half of the 20th century the attempts to govern international processes and events accelerated with the creation most obviously of the League of Nations, but also organizations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). At the end of World War Two, a host of new organizations were created with the explicit purpose of better managing international political and economic affairs—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (now the World Bank), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the UN, for example.

All this suggests that at least some of what we might now call global governance has been going on for some time. The difficulty this poses for our contemporary understanding of the term global governance is that it is not clear how we should understand its novelty: Is there something significant about contemporary forms of global governance that distinguish them from these

earlier efforts? Is it an intensification of patterns of global management or qualitatively different? It is clearly animated by the same kinds of concerns—the idea that states have a common interest in dealing with the challenges they face, and in some cases it involves many of the same kinds of features. The novelty of contemporary global governance is, as we noted earlier, usually thought to reside in the complexity that results from the variety of actors and mechanisms involved, but even here there are significant precedents—the ILO for example, or the BIS. It is not just that 'global governance' might not really be new; it is that there is a long history of describing and explaining this using terms other than global governance.

Global governance and IR theory

This points towards another set of analytical difficulties: how we might understand and explain 'global governance' in theoretical terms. Given the centrality of theoretical disputes to the history and self-image of the discipline of International Relations it is unsurprising that a good deal of effort has gone into theoretically inspired debates about global governance. This kind of engagement seems essential if we are to try to understand in broad terms what global governance really is. Is it simply the exercise of power by dominant states? Does it represent a 'hegemonic project'? Is it really about sustaining and expanding the reach of the global capitalist economy? Should we understand it as promoted by states or by classes or historical blocs? Does it embody and promote certain kinds of ideas and ideologies or should we understand it simply in terms of states interests? And do states really matter anymore?

One obvious way of addressing these kinds of questions has been to use established theories of international politics to examine global governance (for a collection of essays that does just this see Ba and Hoffman 2005). These kinds of engagement have produced some important insights, but anyone familiar with the traditions of international relations theory will recognize that some of the results of this have been rather predictable. Realists have tended to argue that the world has not changed all that much, that states and their power remain the central determinants of international politics, that what regimes of governance do exist are the product of states power (particularly that of the US), that powerful states simply ignore these regimes when it is not in their interests to follow them, and that claims about how global governance (or globalization) have transformed international politics are grossly exaggerated (Waltz, 1999; Sterling-Folker 2005). From this perspective it is not just that there is nothing really new that can be captured under the label of 'global governance' it is also that there is nothing very important about it either. Marxists want to claim that contemporary patterns of global governance can be understood through the lens of

historical materialism, or accounted for by the concepts of world hegemony. Here there has been some recognition that there might be something 'new' about contemporary practices of global governance, but this is only the case because the character of the global capitalist economy, and the problems and social forms it generates, have changed. Feminists argue that the institutions, forces, structures and processes of global governance are inherently gendered. In this sense, the project of global governance is about the reproduction and assertion of gender norms that take heteronormativity, women's role in social reproduction, and institutionalized male dominance as a basis for which issues are addressed. We could go on.

Rationale for the book

We think it would be foolish to adjudicate on these kinds of debates. There are good reasons to think that there can be no adequate resolution to these kinds of debates, and in any case we think that the diversity of approaches to global governance is probably desirable in the sense that it generates thought-provoking and often revealing arguments. We think it would also be foolish to advocate a simple theoretical eclecticism whereby we take bits from each of these theories. The differences between these theoretical positions are often so profound that they simply cannot be combined together in any coherent way. It seems likely then that debates about the real meaning and significance of global governance will continue. However, while there may be limits to what we can with confidence say about the significance and meaning of global governance, we also think that engagement with the term ought to take place on the basis of a familiarity with at least some of the concrete instances of global management or regulation. In other words, we think that students of international politics need to have more than simply an understanding of the debates about the term, its theoretical implications and the ways in which it is understood by different schools of international relations theory.

Our concern with this is not simply 'factual'—although we do think that is important, and we certainly do not think that we (or any of our contributors) can simply 'describe' in any theoretically neutral way, what is going on. But, in our view, students need to know something about what is concretely happening in attempts to regulate, manage and control issues and process in international politics. Having a set of cases about which we have asked the same questions—what is being governed and why? Who are the key actors involved? What kinds of problems and issues have emerged? And, how successful or not has it been? - allows students to get a sense of the complexity of the issues, make connections across the cases, and see similarities and differences between them. These are surely essential first steps in any analysis of what global governance

might be and how we should understand its significance. We might in the end want to say that there is nothing really new about global governance, or that what we call global governance can be fully grasped by one or other theory, but in order to draw these kinds of conclusions we do need to be aware of the complexity and diversity of what is going on in international politics, and this book tries to give some sense of that.

The selection of any set of cases involves making judgments. We have been guided by a number of considerations. The first is what areas of 'global governance' are ones we as teachers of international politics would like our students to have some familiarity with. Teaching global governance often begins with some discussion on theoretical or conceptual approaches to global governance with students attempting to define the term often by conceptions of what it is not or what it might be. It is often not until students are able to apply these conceptual understandings to a range of case studies or projects in which global issues are governed does the picture of global governance become less murky. The second is to pick some cases that have an obvious contemporary relevance to reflect the changing politics, issues, institutions, language and individuals involved in the governance of international politics. The cases included here show the rapid change and contemporary nature of old issues such as the management and politics of health and trade as well as the relatively new concern of how to govern the internet. The third is to explore case studies within these issues and offer new perspectives on governance by specialists in specific fields. In this sense our aim was not to draw together a collection of experts strictly working on global governance but to involve a range of authors working in a variety of fields to apply their knowledge of a specific area to questions of global governance. The goal of which was to see how ideas of global governance are either broadly absorbed or challenged across disciplines and offer insights into how different issues require similar or divergent processes of governance.

Overview of cases

These issues of what global governance might mean, how it operates, and its history are all illustrated and explored in the chapters that follow. Almost all the chapters illustrate the centrality of the UN system to contemporary practices of governance, even if as with the governance of communications and labor, some of the institutions involved predate the establishment of the UN. So, with security we see the continued centrality of the UN Security Council, with migration the centrality of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), with the environment the key role played by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and by UN conferences and summits, with poverty the contemporary centrality of the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs), and with human rights the key role played by UN agreements. In this sense the chapters confirm Rosenau's claim that the UN system is 'central to the conduct of global governance.' But, and very importantly, all the chapters also illustrate the complexity of contemporary practices of global governance, as they all involve a variety of agents and a variety of mechanisms of governance. These range from the involvement of the World Bank, NGOs and research institutes in global environmental governance, to the complex interaction of different types of agents in the governance of the internet, to the role of private forms of financial governance. The mechanisms involved range from international treaties, UN declarations, and domestic legal regimes, to 'naming and shaming', standard setting and campaigning.

All the chapters also illustrate the continued centrality of states, especially powerful states, to the establishment and functioning (and undermining) of regimes of global governance. The cases of migration and health bring out the key role played by states in shifting the focus of governance, and the case of human rights brings out the vital role played by domestic legal system in holding governments to account for their actions. Acknowledging the central of states to contemporary practices of governance does not, however, mean that the 'realist' view of global governance is correct. Even in the hardest of hard cases, security, states are enmeshed in relationships that limit their unilateral room for manoeuvre, and even in the case of the invasion of Iraq, the United States struggled with its relationship with the UN (rather than simply ignoring it), and in the aftermath of the invasion relied on a host of other actors (the World Bank, private security companies, businesses) to achieve their objectives. So even if states are important and powerful, regimes of governance shape what they can do. In some cases, notably global financial governance, states can find themselves struggling to adapt to the unforeseen consequences of mechanism of governance them themselves helped establish. And in all the cases, states have found themselves at least having to respond to pressures from other agents, whether NGOs, businesses or international organizations.

All of the chapters also take as a central theme change over time. They trace the way regimes of governance emerge, develop and sometimes transform. This raises the important question of why they change. The chapters suggest a number of possible further lines of enquiry here. One that comes out forcefully is the role of moments of crisis or dramatic change: the end of World War One, the end of World War Two, the end of the Cold War, and perhaps, the current global financial and economic crisis. It might be the case that prevention is better than cure, but it is also clear that more often than not the development and transformation of regimes of governance takes place in response to perceived failures in existing mechanism and practices. Another issue thrown

up by the centrality of change over times is that we should perhaps think of global governance as an evolving process, rather than simply as something we have more or less of. An important corollary of this is that there will never be an ‘end’ to this process of change—never a time when we can safely say that this or that issue is ‘governed’ globally; all there is is a never-ending process of complex, messy and faltering adaptation involving intensely contestation and argumentation.

Finally, and very importantly, the cases all illustrate the distinctly mixed record that regimes of global governance have had. The most egregious case is, of course, the governance of global finance—the failure of which has had extraordinarily far-reaching consequences. But in a host of other issues areas, failures and inadequacies are clear. The regime of governance of internally displaced persons remains weak. Global agreement on climate change remains hard to achieve. The governance of labour remains fractured, and of course, human rights violations and poverty remain central aspects of the lives of many millions of people. In this sense we should put all the recent academic discussion of global governance in context: it is an important part of international politics, and has important consequences, but it has certainly not transformed global politics, and at the moment it seems unlikely that we will get away from the distinctly ‘second-best’ arrangements that we currently see. On the other hand, there is no sign that attempts to govern global processes will stop. In that sense the chapters that follow should perhaps be seen as snapshots of where we are at the moment with attempts to govern, manage and regulate global processes, flows and issues.