

Conclusion: Governing the World?

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By posing a set of questions to each of the contributors to this book - what is being governed? What are the key mechanisms and actors involved in governing? And what are the issues and problems associated with governance? – the chapters have highlighted a array of actors, political processes, and domains that fall under the umbrella of global governance. This conclusion draws together the main findings of the book in response to these core questions. In so doing it does not provide a handy definition of global governance; as the Introduction outlined this is not the aim of the book and in many ways can be a fruitless endeavour as one key aspect of the concept is its elasticity and nebulous nature. Instead the chapter draws together the central findings of the chapters to highlight common themes, practices and issues that help further our understanding of global governance

What is governed and why?

Almost all aspects of everyday life around the world are now subject to some form of global governance or regulation. Whether regulation by a regional body such as the European Union, a form of international law such as the international health regulations, or subject to convention or norms such as the responsibility to protect. Even if these institutions, laws, norms or ideas are ignored those that breach them are held to account through their existence. Hence in response to the question of what is regulated and why it is clear that most aspects of everyday life are now subject to some form of global governance, the degree to which depends on the issue and where you live.

One way of thinking about the proliferation of regimes of governance has been to focus on the management, supply and regulation of global public goods such as the environment and water. Public goods are generally understood to be those good which are non-excludable and non-rivalrous in consumption; in other words everyone can access them and in so doing one's access should not prevent another person from accessing the same good. The regulation of such goods is seen to require *global* governance because of their global nature. Though some of these

goods can be sourced from different parts of the world, as the politics of water provision attests, there are questions over which public actors such as states or private actors such as water companies can lay claim to owning such goods. Hence there is a need for co-ordination and attempts at management between public and private actors that all have a stake in the provision of such goods at a global level. One problem arises when public goods become private goods. Certain public goods and how they are provided for are becoming increasingly private goods, in that they do exclude people and are rivalrous in consumption. This is evident in the global governance of the patents on pharmaceutical products, an issue that cuts through both the public good of health and the private good of trade where the cost of such treatment makes the public good of health both excludable and rivalrous in consumption. What is to be governed thus includes those goods that are public, increasingly those that are private, and those that are somewhere in between.

The most difficult question to unravel when thinking about global governance is why a specific issue is seen to require governing in the first place. Part of the difficulty of this is it points to how specific issues are understood by the varied actors involved, and the degree to which they are willing to act towards addressing these issues. This can be a collective problem of governments attempting to generate public will in support of measures requiring co-ordinated action and behaviour change from various aspects of society. For example on an issue such as corruption this may require changes to government accountability and transparency mechanisms, oversight and regulation of business practice, and individual perceptions and tolerance. This can be an individual problem of how people perceive threats to their own lives and lifestyles and whether such a threat requires action or governance of some kind. This can be a problem of competing (at times expert) opinion of what actually necessitates a threat to an individual's human rights or a state's security for example, and thus requires the generation of a particular consensus in support of one opinion. The problem of identifying what is governed and why is thus inherently an area of political contestation where competing claims to what should be prioritised and the nature and legitimacy of such claims are questioned or accepted by the individuals, states, public bodies and private agencies involved in the governance of the issue.

The degree to which governance resembles an area of political contestation depends on the issue. For many case studies in this volume, politics is often something implicit to the process of governing but rarely acknowledged in practice. What is governed and why is often seen as functional and in many cases reactionary rather than preventative. Governance arrangements

have often sprung up or been reinvigorated in response to the need or emergent necessity to regulate a specific issue, whether financial crisis or increased trade liberalisation. The underlying assumption is that specific issues such as labour for example both should be and can be governed globally. Moreover such governance necessitates a combination of public actors such as government bodies and expertise drawn from the private sector such as financial regulators or the public sector such as university researchers to draw together effective ways of managing issues. Thus the focus is on management and solution-orientated practice. What becomes tricky is the politics of what constitutes the right solutions or the most effective means of management that is not only linked to what is to be governed but who is the best position to do the governing.

Who does the governing?

A common feature of governance reports, recommendations and progress measurements are collective words such as 'we' and 'our' ('Our Common Neighbourhood') that deliberately position global problems and their governance as something that affects us all. The majority of who does the governing in practice, however, comes down to a broad range of states, civil society organisations, private companies and authorities, knowledge leaders, intergovernmental organisations, and partnerships. And the relationship between these and some common 'we' is a central theme in debates about global governance – do they really represent 'our' interests and concerns? How can 'we' shape what these collective agents do?

It is clear from this collection of case studies that the state is still very much a central part of global governance. States remain the signatories to key forms of international law, are held to account for shortcomings or a lack of will to address problems, and are seen as key sites of legitimacy for global commitments. However the influence of the state in global governance is also dependent on the issue and the state. In some instances individual leaders or political parties tend to be criticised for their role in governing specific issues whether George W. Bush in rendition and the environment or Tony Blair in security rather than the state itself. In other cases it is the governments or states as a whole that are the contentious actors, for example in the case of Australian refugee policy outlined in Orchard's chapter it is not individual members of the government or a political party but Australia as a whole that takes this stance on migrants.

With cases such as the governance of finance the state is seen to have a role but its ability to exert such a role is constrained by market forces and the role of private actors such as credit rating agencies. How states operate in global governance also depends on two distinct factors: i) whether the issue serves their domestic political interests and foreign policy agenda, and ii) whether they are able to exert such an interest in the wider institutions and partnerships of global governance.

Global governance is sometimes seen as the process of the global north governing arrangements in the global south. This case can be argued when looking at how aid money is given to govern global poverty through goal-setting and reform of country systems and political and social structures or how the global trade agenda seems to disadvantage farmers in the predominantly global south. However this binary does not apply to all issues of contemporary global governance. As case studies such as that of extraordinary rendition shows, governance mechanisms are also used to hold states in the global north to account for their actions. Such a north/south divide also overlooks the blurriness of processes of global governance and the agency of actors involved in it. While in some aspects a north-south distinction is clear, in others a more east-west distinction can be made, and in some cases such a distinction does not exist or is in a process of change.

One of the most common arenas for states and non-state actors to exert influence is in intergovernmental organisations, usually falling somewhere under the umbrella of the United Nations. Each of the chapters herein has highlighted at least one UN agency as the cornerstone of global governance. What is clear from the chapters is that the ability of UN agencies to promote co-operation or provide solutions to collective security problems is often wanting. UN directives in the form of guidelines, resolutions, or in-country operations all serve to establish a general framework of governance for multiple issues. However, the degree to which these frameworks are integrated into domestic contexts, seen as legitimate, or adhered to remains questionable. In some issues such as security, the UN remains hampered by the dominance of the permanent five members of the Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States of America). In other areas such as climate change the UN is limited by divisions between country concerns in the north and south and with regard to issues such as

health the institution is overcrowded by other bilateral and multilateral agencies with bigger budgets and greater expertise.

A common finding across the chapters has been the lack of influence and presence UN agencies have in comparison to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and private agencies. International financial institutions play a key role in the process of governing in perhaps obvious areas such as labour, corruption, and trade as well as roles in less obvious areas such as health and the environment. This has been a growing phenomenon of the last thirty years and has been an intrinsic part of the growth of market-based principles in the process of governing. The growth of economism is evident in the application of market-based principles of goal-orientated strategies and targets in areas such as governing poverty, markets and trading schemes for pollution reduction, the focus on economic growth over labour standards, and the stated benefits of free trade with minimal public sector intervention or barriers. These principles are not only applied to how problems of governance are understood and addressed, but are also relevant to the type of actors that are seen to be required to implement the process. For some, market principles are best implemented by those who know how markets work, i.e. the private sector, rather than those who want to limit or regulate markets for a variety of reasons, but most commonly taxation, i.e. the state (depending of course on the type of state). In other areas the private sector seeks to create governance arrangements as a means of self-regulation to prevent the emergence of state regulation. Hence governance when linked to markets requires a degree of private sector participation.

Public-private partnerships are not necessarily a new phenomenon in governance, and have arguably been a key part of the modern world since the beginnings of empire and the industrial revolution. What is pertinent about partnerships today is their ubiquity across multiple areas of governance. Partnerships are seen as a key way in which to widen participation in governance and bring in expertise, dialogue and crucially money from the private sector into public forums of governance. In the main such partnerships are a one way street, the bringing of the private sector into the public sector rather than the other way around. The private sector is subject to public regulation and the private sector does consult aspects of the public sector, however partnership of bringing the public into the private is seen as a rarity or, at the extreme, an

example of corrupt practice. Either way these publicly-based partnerships are central actors in global governance whether in the provision of security, health, or labour standards.

The prominence of state-led and market-based approaches to multiple areas of governance often means that civil society organisations are overlooked. The term ‘civil society organisations’ can refer to a broad range of highly professionalized international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), transnational advocacy groups, community groups, activists, and faith based organisations. Many of the chapters highlight the role that these organizations have played in bringing key issues to the global agenda. They boost collaboration and provide channels of advocacy for those seen to be detached from the decision-making forums of global governance and are often important interlocutors between the international and local by their members and donor partners. These actors are not only involved in the framing and profile-raising of particular issues, but are also intrinsic to the implementation of global projects and agendas and form the basis of service delivery and partnerships in-country. They are contentious for the campaigns they promote and their claims to representation and legitimacy, yet they fill a gap by making global governance more transparent and more accountable to people, at least to some degree.

The final key actor with regard to who does the governing is that of experts or knowledge sources. Networks of experts cluster around all of the issues examined in this book, and they have become key opinion formers and influential contributors to how states, civil society organisations, business and intergovernmental organisations think about global problems and how to address them. The complexities of specific issues in global governance and the demands on the time of employees of various institutions has given rise to an expert network of consultants that offer advice and knowledge on a range of issues from how to harness social media, to how to break the trade deadlock in Doha, to how to best eradicate malaria. These networks stress the technocratic aspect of global governance in providing scientific or knowledge-based responses to global problems. The growth of such actors into a culture of consultancy in global governance has to an extent shifted the focus of governance away from the political to the technocratic.

In the regimes of governance examined in this book there are, then, a complex set of agents involved, relating in often-complex ways. These relationships are sometimes co-operative, but at other times antagonistic, and it is through this that the politics of global governance becomes visible. Different agents often have different interests, commitments and sources of legitimacy, and have different abilities to influence the construction and development of regimes of governance. This is one reason why global governance is often such a messy, contentious and ultimately open-ended process.

What are the main mechanisms of governance?

Governance operates through a range of mechanisms. Binding or non-binding forms of international law have provided the main framework for the practice of global governance across the chapters. This is evident when looking at the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The central purpose of such international law is protection, guidance, adherence, and standard setting for all actors involved in global governance. Legitimacy for such legal frameworks is derived from the number of signatories a specific law may have, what the law regulates and the origin of the law. There are extensive debates about the status and significance of international law, however as these chapters have shown its very existence, as vague as some aspects may be, provides a benchmark for governance and the behaviour of states and other actors. International law with regard to global governance traditionally focuses on sources of public law, however the increasingly privatised nature of governance, and problems of trade and finance, see an increased blurring of public and private international law.

One form of soft international law or soft regulation is voluntary standards and codes of conduct. Labour standards, financial regulation, or corruption monitoring are all examples of voluntary conduct established by partnerships between the private and public sector as means of self-regulation and standard-setting. Such standards are often established at the global level through initiatives such as the Global Compact and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) but impact on national behaviour through their adoption at state level. The purpose of such standards is regulation, crucially either in partnership with the state or somehow separate from the state. Standardisation is perhaps one of the less recognised

mechanisms of global governance but perhaps the most all pervasive when considering the informal behaviour and codes of conduct private companies do or do not adhere to, how they become the basis for domestic law, and how they impact on everyday life of people around the world, the products we buy and how we work.

One way in which international law shapes the conduct of states is through the creation and codification of norms. Norms of behaviour, conduct and governance also emerge from entrepreneurs (whether states, individuals, civil society organisations, private businesses) and through processes of repetition, practice and consolidation can become entrenched within domestic and international systems as operating principles of governance. Norms can take on different forms and expressions and can be generated by a range of actors. Civil society organisations for example have been particularly influential in the creation of key human rights norms. The extent to which norms actually operate to constrain actors varies from issue to issue, and like almost everything else involved in global governance, are subject to contestation and interpretation.

Ideas and knowledge or claims to knowledge are another key mechanism of global governance. As Death's chapter highlights, competing rationalities or ideas about the problems of the planetary environment lead to very different outcomes or justifications for action and inaction. Ideas or claims to knowledge can be used as a source of 'evidence' in which to generate political will or engender fear or the need to act on specific issues. Knowledge can thus be used as a mechanism of governance in two main ways. First it can be used to frame an issue in a specific manner so as to elicit wider support or suppress the collective need for action. Claims to expertise can here refute widespread political opinion with the assertion that somehow the 'facts' or 'evidence' is incorrect and thus the need for governance is wrong, misunderstood, or somehow different to what was first thought. The second use of knowledge can be in establishing and maintaining a dominant paradigm of how we think about the world and solutions to specific problems. A common factor in many of the chapters has been the liberal manner in which problems ranging from migration to labour to trade have been framed and responded to. This liberal approach to governance issues is supported by knowledge claims about effective policies that promote good governance or market-based reform and to an extent narrows the scope for alternative paradigms or claims to knowledge. Thus as a mechanism of

governance, specific kinds of knowledge are intrinsic to how issues are understood, approached and governed; and when adopted at the global level can be applied in ways that squeeze the space for alternative means of thinking about problems.

A central mechanism associated with the role of norms and knowledge in global governance is that of issue-framing. Incidents of framing issues as security threats, human rights concerns, emergencies or crises can be seen throughout the chapters. The purpose of such framing is to get attention for an issue, galvanise political and monetary support, and precipitate action on a competing international stage. Issue framing that targets key international civil servants, political leaders, and public opinion that generates associated campaigns and leverage can elevate specific issues to areas of high importance in global governance. As Kamradt-Scott's chapter shows this has been a key source of getting financial support for global health strategies, particularly HIV/AIDS. However such framing can also lead to threat or crisis fatigue that has the opposite effect of reducing an issue's pertinence in global governance.

Issue framing, voluntary standards and norms are limited as mechanisms of global governance without transnational political campaigns to support them. The sources of such campaigns can be from civil society, key states, the private sector, intergovernmental organisations, or the combination of all four. Campaigns elevate particular ideas or issues and galvanise widespread political support for their governance. Moreover campaigns are intrinsic to adherence to international law with regard to the public ability to name and shame key actors that fall out of commonly accepted standards. Such naming and shaming can have little immediate effect in some instances, as Blakeley and Raphael's case study on human rights and rendition suggests, but can have a longer implicit effect on the reputation of a state, person or company. Global campaigns elevate issues of concern, police breaks from key standards or norms, and can act as markers of progress.

Measurement, goal-setting and performance have increasingly become mechanisms of global governance used by intergovernmental organisations, states and civil society organisations to measure progress in response to issues. This is most evident in the case of the Millennium Development Goals used in the governance of poverty as Hulme and Scott's chapter discussed. Measurement and goal-setting suggest global governance is a project that can be measured and

monitored. In this sense global governance could be interpreted as something that has an end project or goal or specific aims. The content of such aims, however, remains precarious and hard to identify. As with the section on what is to be governed, this can depend on the issue, the actors involved, and the ideas popular or dominant at the time. Hence global governance is not a static entity but a process that is always in flux. Attempts to control, regulate and monitor progress of the project of global governance thus lead to several shortcomings and difficulties in the practice of global governance and how we can understand it.

Governing the World? The practice and problems of Global Governance

What is clear from the enclosed chapters is that while regimes governance exist to regulate global issues and promote greater co-operation between varied agents, there are several tensions and problems within the current forms of global governance. On the one hand the process of governing issues can be seen to be working; there are multiple different configurations of actors, processes and ideas established to respond to both contemporary and traditional issues. This shows the existence of political will, support and commitment to at least some form of global management. However the type of will, support and commitment often remains limited and, and there are significant problems with how global issues and processes are identified and understood. Some issues, such as labour and poverty for example, are seen as inherently feminised problems; yet gendered frames for understanding them or addressing them are not forthcoming. Some ideas or concerns about security threats supersede wider concerns of human rights and protection of migrants. Some regulation and standardisation in areas such as trade have an adverse impact on aspects of health. Hence the case studies included in this book show that no aspect of governance operates in isolation of wider processes of global governance thus leading to tensions over what should be governed and what forms or issues of global governance take priority and why.

Competition for political attention in global governance can in part stem from a lack of leadership. In many of the case studies leadership mainly comes from dominant states, the odd civil society campaign, or in some instances the private sector. What is lacking is leadership in intergovernmental organisations. The result of which is the culmination of many state and non-

state actors operating at multiple levels of governance with only directives, statements and rhetoric to guide them. Directives, agreements and goals are all set but there is little leadership in seeing them through. Problems of leadership and commitment to some of the regulatory frameworks of global governance have in some instances led to the generation of new institutions, partnerships and frameworks for action. Some of these new actors and processes have been successful in generating money to support an issue and providing new ideas, however in other areas they have added to an overcrowded space in which governance is defined by many different acronyms rather than activity or function.

Different understandings, rationalities or paradigms in which various issues of global governance are understood can generate inertia and lack of progress. This is evident in aspects of governing climate change, poverty and human rights. What to prioritise and how to do so can generate competing approaches to an issue that can counteract each other and undermine co-ordination. Global events and state priorities can skew agendas towards self-interest or alignment with other areas or efforts. However this is not just the action of states; intergovernmental organisations can also align issues and mechanisms of governance with their own interests or that which they think will gain greater traction in the international system. Thus the merits or normative arguments for why specific issues become politically relevant or important in the international system are often second to or intertwined with domestic interests or the money available to implement processes of governance.

Money and structures of capital overwhelmingly frame the space and options processes of governance operate in. Nesvetailova and Belli's chapter on governing finance shows how governance structures failed to address or foresee the 2007 financial crisis, and have since failed to establish some form of regulation or control of capital and money around the world. Langan's chapter on trade shows how the wealth of rich countries and the lack of wealth in developing countries limit progress in consolidating a global system of liberalised trade. Capital is increasingly subject to voluntary standards and private forms of regulation and international law. However public regulation and *global* public regulation is seen as somehow wanting. This is in part because of a lack of political will and part a lack of ability. The lack of such will and perceptions of an unregulated system of finance however is changing in aspect of public opinion, particularly within Europe. This may, in turn, generate wider debates on how

money can or should be regulated globally within existing and new models of governance; or, it may see a shift of European ideas and control of mechanisms of governance decline.

These problems suggest that global governance is somehow not working as well as it might, and that governing issues is and always will be somewhat problematic. However, this only holds if governance or governing is seen as a static entity that is not capable of evolution or change. Moreover, it also suggests that governance is somehow separate from and not a space for politics – namely contestation, discussion, and debates over what the best course of action is, who is best to lead it, and what mechanisms are available to do so from the broad spectrum of options available. Global governance is messy, vague and only vaguely cohesive, as it involves a myriad of ideas, people, and social forces. What the problems inherent to the practice of global governance really suggest is that governing is not just about the process of managing a broad array of actors and ideas; it is also an area of political contestation and negotiation. Hence the problems of global governance are in part directly attributable to the process, mechanisms and actors involved, but also reflect the core dynamics of the politics of international relations. Global governance is thus in many ways the technocratic, multi-participant way in which international relations is operationalized in practice. It is thus not separate to or somehow different from the tensions of say diplomacy and foreign policy, but is an intrinsic and vital part of how we understand the management of international relations.