

## GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

**Abstract:** After brief introduction of global governance, this entry describes current debate on global governance through transformationalist, managerial, and critical approaches. It also elaborates on links between global governance, international law, and development.

**Keywords:** global governance; sustainable development; United Nations; international law; managerialism.

Global governance commonly refers to a phenomenon of governance arrangements encompassing our globe, increasingly so from the downfall of bipolar world order. It denotes a sum of collective efforts of global, national, and local actors to address consequences of increasing interdependence and to pursue global order based on specific goals and values. The definition provided by the UN Commission on Global Governance in 1995 (*Our global neighbourhood: The report of the Commission on Global Governance*) is a standard reference among scholars. It famously described governance as 'a sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs'. Because of broad, dynamic, and complex process of interactive decision-making involved in managing common affairs on global level, report pointed out that 'there is no single model or form of global governance, nor is there a single structure or set of structures. Global governance scholars focus on decreasing effectiveness of state interventions in the face of exponential effects of global challenges and crises; increase in number and influence of international and regional organizations; rising importance of private actors and empowerment of individuals within international system; increasing multiplicity of levels and actors involved in decision-making and implementation across different sectors of global politics; complex nature of relationships and interactions between them; criticisms based on concerns for democratization and legitimacy of these mechanisms and interactions.

Global governance also serves as an analytical framework to better understand and explain contemporary political developments and socio-economic transformations. As such, it has become a dominant tool of social scientists studying world politics. Thomas Weiss (1995) famously referred to global governance as 'heuristic device to capture and describe the confusing and seemingly ever-accelerating transformation of the international system'. In a recent attempt, Roberto Dominguez and Rafael Velazquez Flores (2018) conceive global governance as 'a framework of analysis or intellectual device to study the complexity of global processes involving multiple actors that interact at different levels of interest aggregation'.

Global governance has become one of defining elements of international law's context. Centrality of global governance to debates about how our world should be governed necessitates cross-fertilization between debates on the future of global governance and that of international law. International law has represented idea of progress in world political thought. It is oftentimes seen

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as 'an inherent progressive value for humankind, along the Kantian mantra that internationalism signifies a desirable move towards a superior state of social development' (Orford, Hoffmann, & Clarks, 2016). Similarly, some maximalist conceptions of global governance see it as a way and means of realizing an ideal of orderly and just world. Global governance also helps to realize progress of international law. Potential of global governance for internal improvement of international law is underlined in Jan Klabbers' recent statement of international law where he sees international law as part of a broader pattern of global governance. International law needs to accept this reality and update its tools to adapt to the changing world. Embracing global governance, in its turn, helps international law to maintain its relevance in global order and helps it to continue (re)producing meaningful and useful discourse and praxis on the conduct of international politics (2017).

Development is a major global governance goal. Global governance has relied on sectoral approaches to questions of global economic governance, global security governance, global environmental governance, or global governance for development. The latter's importance is gradually increasing. United Nations development agenda is one of main drivers of this transformation. UN action on development includes milestones like 1986 Declaration on Right to Development, Millennium Development Goals launched at Millennium Summit in 2000, or SDGs as announced in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Status of United Nations, which pursues social progress of world countries, as a center-piece of global governance architecture reinforces the link between global governance and development. Development has also transcendental character as success of governance efforts in the fields of security, economy, or environment largely depends on capacity of world countries to effectively accomplish these objectives. Achievement of global governance goals for development necessitates special attention to needs and capacity of developing countries. Solidarity with developing countries has been a constant feature in world politics since 1940s.

Global governance is ubiquitous and ambiguous. However, this imprecise and undetermined nature of the term demonstrates that, despite its skeptics, global governance has become a fundamental phenomenon on world politics. As such, multiplicity, complexity, and ambiguity are inherently part of it. This multiplicity can be addressed by emphasizing three perspectives on global governance. These perspectives are *transformationalist*, *managerial* and *critical* perspectives.

### ***Transformationalist perspectives on global governance***

For transformationalists, global governance holds the potential to carry humankind into orderly future. It fights disorder caused by human behavior by changing the behavior of the latter, both on individual and collective levels. Global governance denotes the belief that humankind must re-evaluate the ways it conducts business in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Political and economic tools we use for international cooperation were largely product of certain historical and

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socio-political circumstances; they are nowadays inadequate to deal with challenges facing world community. Our world is transformed by events which have been unfolding since the end of WWII. Slow yet gradual emergence of global constitutionalism around the UN system, consolidation of human rights as the main politico-legal framework, establishment of liberal economic order as the dominant system for world economic affairs, or ongoing formation of global civil society are signs of deep transformations of world politics. The world is also facing great environmental challenges. For scholars like James Rosenau, one of the most eminent representatives of this perspective, these developments lead to transformation of the world wherein the nature of authority is fundamentally changing, rendering traditional distinctions between international and domestic meaningless (Bevir, 2007). Global governance presents itself as the most adequate framework to deal with and accompany these transformations. For Castells (2008), the globalization has already transformed the world: emergence of global civil society and of ad hoc forms of global governance are direct consequences of this transformation. While dissolving nation-states into a global government is not possible nor desirable, leaving current atomistic structure of international system as it is also counterproductive. In this constellation, global governance appears the most relevant framework for mitigating frictions between passing vestiges of Westphalian system with necessities of unfolding new world, and for consolidating accomplishments of long running transformation of world politics. Embracing global governance is desirable for upgrading our political philosophy.

The famous 1995 report of the UN Commission on Global Governance was clearly transformationalist in terms of definition, scope, and courses of action it contained. It proclaimed a 'new world' which needed 'a new vision that can galvanize people everywhere to achieve higher levels of co-operation in areas of common concern and shared destiny'. Some of its unorthodox recommendations included introducing global taxation, establishing an economic security council, rendering ICJ's verdicts binding, or expanding authority of the Secretary General. The Agenda 2030 announced 'a supremely ambitious and transformational vision' in order to 'shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path'. It identified 17 goals with the purpose of achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. Transformationalist approach sees thus global governance as an excellent opportunity to reconsider our conceptions of national and global governance to better reflect change. Two important consequences as well as goals of this transformation for international system must be singled out: on one hand, global governance permits to add nature into traditional equation between state and individual; on the other hand, it erects global justice as one of the main goals of the international system.

### ***Managerial approach to global governance***

For Jan Klabbers, who used the term with respect to international organizations, managerial approach 'presupposes two things: first, that institutionalized cooperation between independent states will contribute to the solution of common problems and second, that increased cooperation

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through international organizations will lead to a better world. Much of the debate around global governance adopts the same logic: states are increasingly ineffective to deal with global challenges; hence they need to promote new forms of inter-state and beyond the state cooperation in order to manage consequences of globalization and to improve the world. For Castells (2008), 'increasing inability of nation-states to confront and manage the processes of globalization of the issues that are object of their governance leads to ad hoc forms of global governance'.

Functionalist definition of global governance stands as 'collective efforts to identify, understand, or address worldwide problems and processes that went beyond the capacities of individual states' (Dominguez and Flores, 2018). The function of global governance is to enable states and other actors of the international system to manage consequences of globalization and international interdependence. The main difference of managerial approach from transformationalist approach appears in two ways. First, relying on states as main promoters and enforcers of global governance while at the same time requiring from them to address questions of legitimacy and democratization (i.e. need to enlarge scope of their partnerships, to adopt inclusive understanding of stakeholders, to institute environmental issues as global policy-making domains and further democratize and globalize their decision-making procedures). Second, adopting specific and sectoral goals which remain modest compared to mission of reconfiguring the world political system: the main objective of global governance is not reconfiguring conventional political and socio-economic structures of world politics; it is rather improving and bettering the day-to-day governance of the world relying on global regulatory regimes. As such, managerial approach seems to claim primacy among different approaches to global governance today. This shift from transformationalist to managerial perspective is clearly evident in a change of language on the UN vision toward global governance.

Committee for Development's report on 'Global governance and global rules for development in the post-2015 Era', adopts distinctly managerial approach. The report restates intergovernmental cooperation at the center of the global partnership for development. It states that 'intergovernmental cooperation has a vital role to play in the achievement of global development goals, in terms not only of the resources and technical assistance it can provide but also in the areas of policy decision-making and norm-setting. Global governance encompasses the totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures, and initiatives through which States and their citizens try to bring more predictability, stability, and order to their responses to transnational challenges. Effective global governance can only be achieved with effective international cooperation' (Committee for Development Policy, 2014). The Agenda 2030 relies on managerial approach to launch global partnership for achieving sustainable development goals. Firstly, it identifies main challenges preventing humankind from achieving sustainable development. It then specifies 17 goals and 169 targets covering different sectors of economic, social, and environmental development in order to overcome those challenges. It announces a global partnership bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society, the UN systems and other actors and stakeholders to mobilize all available resources to achieve SDGs.

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Managerial approach is also conducive to expansion of global governance. It advances demand for more global governance to increase efficiency of global efforts for development. Committee for Development put forward two conditions for effectively tackling development challenges in post-2015 era. It called for reappraisal of the role of governments in global governance, especially that of developing countries. At the same time, it articulated a need for strengthening global governance rules in order to manage increasing interdependence among countries efficiently. More specifically, it expected the United Nations to strengthen its position in global governance in order to spearhead global efforts to promote sustainable development. Ambitious scope of SDGs can also be partly explained by the feeling that fulfilment of MDGs still left an unfinished business.

Daniel Esty's elaborate definition of global governance summarizes well different aspects of this global governance bargain which is built on the premises of continuing to see states as main enablers of global governance while at the same time asking them to adopt inclusive and innovative stance to governance. For Daniel Esty, 'supranational governance as any number of policymaking processes and institutions that help to manage international interdependence, including (1) negotiation by nation-states leading to a treaty; (2) dispute settlement within an international organization; (3) rulemaking by international bodies in support of treaty implementation; (4) development of government-backed codes of conduct, guidelines, and norms; (5) prenegotiation agenda-setting and issue analysis in support of treaty-making; (6) technical standard-setting to facilitate trade; (7) networking and policy coordination by regulators; (8) structured public-private efforts at norm creation; (9) informal workshops at which policymakers, NGOs, business leaders, and academics exchange ideas; and (10) private sector policymaking activities' (Esty, 2005).

### ***Critical accounts of global governance***

Critical perspectives stem from various school of thoughts in International Relations and international law. Two elements characterize IR scholars' stance on global governance. First, they question universal origins and universal language of global governance. Second, they adopt a skeptical stance toward goals of global governance as well as motivations of actors promoting it. For some scholars, global governance's universal language masks the hegemonical position of the United States across different spectrum of international and global governance. For John Ikenberry (2014), 'system of global governance emerged after World War II as an American order-building project'. For him, current global governance is a strange mix of Westphalian and liberal internationalist projects and as such follows both hierarchical and democratic logics at the same time. It is American leadership which provides management of tensions between these two contradictory logics. Thus, global governance is 'management of liberal internationalism'. Great power origins of global governance can also be read in parallel to geopolitical considerations behind development discourse. Development scholars denote that contemporary development theory originated from US-government backed social inquiries to promote development models along capitalist lines among newly decolonized countries which constituted developing world after

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second World War. Hence, development practices in global governance is a way of perpetuating and reinforcing gap between developed and developing worlds.

Critical scholars also focus on legitimacy deficit of global governance. For them, global governance bargain is less legitimate than that associated with government. These criticisms single out major deficiencies of current global governance arrangements and highlight the need to reform them. For Rorden Wilkinson, these deficiencies may appear as absence of long-term efficiency of some governance innovations, lack of truly equitable and participatory mechanisms, or inadequate care for environmental, justice and human rights concerns of world community. (Bevir, 2007). For international lawyers, global governance rises substantial challenges. Uncertainty about the nature of actors participating in global governance, ambiguity around the basis of authority for global governance, or lack of accountability of global governance actors are among most pressing ones. Contemporary discourses on multipolarity, democratizing world order, and globalizing International Relations bring additional criticisms towards global governance. Their main concern is *who* exercise authority to define frame and scope of the global governance and *whom* it benefits most rather than *why* we need global governance (transformationalist argument) or *how* we should design it (managerial approach).

- **Ikboljon Qoraboyev**, M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

### **Further reading**

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