
Global Governance. International Relations are no longer a matter primarily for nation-states. International organizations and supranational institutions have taken root as well. Nongovernmental actors participate in political processes, and national publics closely follow developments outside their own countries. The interplay of national and supranational policies, issues surrounding the juridification of international relations, and questions of global governance, are examined at the WZB predominantly in the Research Area on International Politics and Law.

Governing the World without World Government States, Societies and Institutions Interact in Many Ways

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Climate change, the loss of biodiversity, worldwide terrorism, bank, currency, and financial crises – such global problems can no longer be solved by nation states alone. There is however no central world government endowed with a monopoly of power and legitimacy. But a system of what political science calls “global governance” is developing. It includes the totality of collective arrangements that address global problems or states of affairs. Governance includes the content of regulation as well as the norms that describe the process by which regulatory arrangements come about and are put in place. The actors involved justify governance on grounds of serving the common interest of a collectivity or – in even stronger terms – serving the common good, even though other motives all too often determine what they do.

National governments continue to play an important role. They coordinate and harmonize policy, and where necessary involve non-governmental actors. The mutual commitment to renounce discriminatory trade policy is one example of such global governance through joint government action.

Forms of transnational governance have also increasingly developed, with societal groupings collaborating across borders and giving themselves rules. Internet domain names, for example, are assigned by ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) without governments being formally involved. In a mixed form, states become party to transnational arrangements in so-called public-private partnerships, such as the Global Fund, which has become most important in fighting HIV and other epidemic diseases. It is the overall arrangement of these various modes of control that constitute global governance. International politics has fundamentally changed with the development of these forms of control. International political authority has emerged: states recognize formally or de facto that decisions can be made at the international level that affect their own jurisdiction and are to be regarded as binding even if they run contrary to their own national arrangements and priorities. The delegation of decision-making powers to the International Criminal Court

Summary: Global issues call for globally coordinated governance. A diverse and still only partial system of global governance is developing by interaction between national governments, international institutions, and non-state actors. Efficient global governance can reach deep into national societies. Given the lack of coordination, legitimacy, and equity in global governance, resistance is growing; international politics is being politicized.

or the willingness to accept majority decisions of the UN Security Council are examples of the emergence of political authority beyond the nation state.

This undermines the characteristic structures of traditional international politics: it is no longer only horizontal politics between states but now has vertical components, too, between international institutions on the one hand and states and individuals on the other. Global governance thus has a profound and powerful impact within national societies that national governments cannot simply prevent.

The concept of global governance and the associated political processes have long been subject to critical scrutiny. The political scientist Claus Offe, for example, complains that, as opposed to the government/governing concept, governance manages without a subject: "Something happens but no-one has done it." Political processes analysed from the perspective of global governance do indeed present difficulties in attributing responsibility for certain policy outcomes. Global governance as we use the term is, however, not a political programme but an analytical concept. In this sense it serves not to justify global conditions – an approach that could be levelled at the earlier, political uses of the concept – but to critically analyse global political processes. From such a critical perspective, three structural problems of global governance are particularly evident.

Coordination: global governance comprises a complex assortment of international institutions that are mostly limited to a given sector or region. The boundaries are usually blurred. There is almost always incomplete overlap in both membership and subject matter. The World Trade Organisation is responsible for commerce, the World Health Organisation for health. But what happens with commercial issues that are relevant to health? Or are they rather health issues relevant to commerce?

The absence of mechanisms for coordinating governance like those that exist at the national level, as provided, above all, by heads of government (the determining authority in disputes between government departments), constitutional courts (Is a security measure compatible with civil rights and liberties?), and public opinion (Do we want growth or environmental protection?) points to a first structural defect of global governance. Although the various international institutions interact and continuously adapt to one another, there is almost no overall coordination on the basis of principles.

To the extent that such coordination does take place – if only at G-8/20 meetings – it is confined to a very exclusive circle. The coordinative activities of global, multi-level governance thus prove to be both limited and fortuitous.

There are no authorities with responsibilities spanning problem fields that deal with collisions between the component areas of *global governance* on the basis of fundamental values; and such authorities are of key importance for a constitutional order. The relationship between international and national rules also often remains indeterminate and varies depending on the national constitutions of the countries involved. Some accept the *de facto* supremacy of international treaties and advocate the development of a *jus cogens* under international law, a binding legal system that cannot be overruled by other treaties. Others, by contrast, insist unconditionally on their national sovereignty. This is particularly apparent in the conflict on the development of the International Criminal Court.

The relationship between transnational regimes and national law is also not infrequently hazy. Whereas national courts appear to support the *lex mercatoria*, international trade law based on common law, suspensions of athletes by transnational sport organizations have been increasingly called into question by national courts.

As a result, *global governance* has proved to be extremely fragmentary. The different elements do not combine to form a coherent order. Thus the defence of basic rights remains fragile and is ultimately left up to individual countries.



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Legitimation: global governance also produces legitimation problems. As long as international institutions limit themselves merely to managing interdependence, which presupposes the consent of each member state, problems of legitimation hardly arise. But this is changing as the authority of international institutions grows. Their democratization is now also demanded. But some consider a democratic process beyond the nation state to be structurally excluded, since the EU and the other international organizations lack the social prerequisites for democracy. Sceptics consider democratic legitimacy to be possible only in the framework of a *demos*, within a political community with the potential for democratic self-government such as is to be found in the concept of the modern nation. Beyond the nation state, they argue, a key social prerequisite for a democratic political community is lacking: the political space. The coincidence of nation and democracy, it is alleged, is not a historical accident: there is a systematic and indissoluble link between the two.

However, there is a more optimistic interpretation of international institutions. In terms of democratic categories, international institutions are a reasonable answer to problems facing democracies in times of globalization. For they contribute to eliminating the incongruence between the social and the political space. Theoretically, the development of denationalized governance structures helps everyone affected by external political decisions but who have no say in them. In this sense, international institutions are not the problem but part of the solution to the problems of modern democracy. Nevertheless, those propagating this position will not deny that existing international institutions are plagued by considerable democratic shortcomings that will be difficult to eliminate in the short term.

This gives rise to a growing need for other forms of direct legitimation for international decisions. International institutions react to this need partly by establishing new legitimating procedures, for example to protect human rights. However, such mechanisms cannot cover all legitimation needs. The exercise of authority at the international level thus leads to a growing awareness of the importance of international institutions, to the mobilization of societal interests to influence them, and to growing contentiousness – in short, to the politicization of these institutions.

International institutions are politicized not only by transnational non-governmental organizations such as ATTAC or Greenpeace but also by emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil. That such countries now address their criticism of the status quo less to the American government than to international institutions is an expression of global governance.

Liberal bias: another structural shortcoming of global governance lies in the systematic preferential treatment accorded liberalization. For one thing, the nation state finds it more and more difficult in a globalized world to maintain the accustomed social standards. In the competition for mobile capital, a situation has arisen in which the social policy-makers are under stricter obligation to justify their projects – even though the gap between poor and rich has grown in many Western industrial countries. It has not been possible to date to counter this loss of national effectiveness in social policy by establishing international institutions. International institutions appear not to be suitable for redistributive intervention in transnational markets.

Moreover, most international institutions themselves are predisposed towards liberalization. Whether it is a matter of eliminating trade barriers, removing controls on capital flows, or establishing uniform accounting standards: the intention is usually to create open world markets in order to enhance efficiency. Much more rarely, the matter at issue is market regulation to create stability and prevent undesirable effects. The weakness of the international financial regime in international relations had thus been lamented long before the financial crisis. The lack of regulation was a major factor in provoking it.

The impetus of international institutions towards creating world markets has in recent years been relativized and supplemented by market intervention. But,

despite some regulation in the environmental field, in human rights, and now in fiscal matters, the effect of global liberalization persists. This is also one of the key criticisms levelled at existing international institutions by the emerging powers.

The shortcomings of global governance mentioned have long since become more than latent structural problems. They manifest themselves in social resistance to global governance and its use for specific policy goals by an increasing number of social actors. To this extent, global governance faces a fundamental dilemma. Global measures are often objectively needed but are difficult to push through in the given institutional framework and against the backdrop of existing legitimation requirements. Whether the growing manifestation of this dilemma and the associated politicization will clear the way out of this dilemma remains to be seen.

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