1 | *Who governs the globe?*

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Academics and policymakers speak frequently about global governance but do so in the passive voice. They treat governance as structure or process. Global governance is "the sum of organizations, policy instruments, financing mechanisms, rules, procedures, and norms" or "the collective effort to identify, understand, and address worldwide problems that are beyond the capacity of individual States" (Najam *et al.* 2006; Club of Rome n.d.). Global governance is something that happens; no one, apparently, actually does it. Analysts rarely talk about global *governors* and have not made the agents in this process central to their analysis.

To the extent that international relations (IR) scholars do think about who global "governors" might be, they think about states. States, after all, are widely recognized political authorities. Their job is to govern. And they do govern, or try to, in many areas of global activity. They sign interstate treaties, create international law, and promulgate wide-ranging rules to initiate, regulate, and "govern" activity in desired ways.

States are by no means alone in this endeavor, however. The global policy arena is filled with a wide variety of actors – international organizations, corporations, professional associations, advocacy groups, and the like – seeking to "govern" activity in issue areas they care about. These actors are not merely occupying global structures. They are active agents who want new structures and rules (or different rules) to solve problems, change outcomes, and transform international life. Governors are thus engaged in processes that are both quintessentially political and dynamic, even transformational. These processes are political in that power and mobilization are keys to success. They are dynamic in that nothing is ever governed once and for all time. Any understanding of governors and governance must account for constant possibility of change.

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International relations theories that focus only on states are poorly equipped to understand this kaleidoscope of activity by such a wide range of agents. Functionalist theories of global governance pick up more activity but downplay the contentious politics of global governance. Neither type of theory provides much guidance about dynamics and change. Without theories about these diverse actors and dynamic processes, we do not have conceptual equipment with which to understand significant aspects of global politics.

Consequently, in this project we focus on the agents of global governance whom we call "global governors." For purposes of this inquiry, *global governors are authorities who exercise power across borders for purposes of affecting policy.*[1] *Governors thus create issues, set agendas, establish and implement rules or programs, and evaluate and/or adjudicate outcomes.* Rather than assuming that states govern, we investigate. Who actually performs the tasks involved in governing? Our investigation explicitly centers on the process by which these actors gain and use authority. Where do global governors come from? Why are they in charge? How do they accomplish their goals? What effects do their actions produce?

Answering these questions leads us to focus on two types of relationships: relationships between governors and the governed, and relationships among governors, themselves. Understanding why the governed recognize or defer to governors offers insight into why governors are influential and how they behave. Expertise might propel professional associations to the fore, inducing other actors to accept their policy proposals. Advocacy organizations often appeal to moral principles to gain authority and followers. Corporations sometimes gain authority because others perceive them as capable of achieving results. Understanding relationships among governors is similarly important. Governance is not a solo act, and governors can rarely accomplish ends alone. They divide labor, delegate, compete, and cooperate with one another in many ways to produce the outcomes we observe. Almost all governing in contemporary global politics seems to be the result of governor *inter*actions of various kinds. If their ability to achieve outcomes depends on their relations with other governors, understanding the conditions under which governors compete or cooperate can help

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[1] There are a great many definitions of global governance. In addition to those already cited, see Keohane (2003).

explain outcome effectiveness. Focusing on these two relationships, we develop a framework for explaining both individual global governance outcomes and the dynamics of authority in global governance over time.

Our focus on governors of diverse kinds and their interactions puts us in league with a growing number of scholars who question the state-centrism of our field. Recent analyses have focused on the characteristics of *types* of nonstate actors or private authority to understand the varied effects these might cause.[2] Our hunch, however, is that it is not the type of actor but the *character of relationships*, both among governors and between governor and governed, that is key to understanding global politics. The framework we develop seeks to understand these relationships so as to explain governors, outcomes, and change.

We begin this chapter by discussing structural changes that have ushered a more diverse cast of global governors on to the world stage. Globalization, privatization, and technological change have empowered new types of actors and the end of the Cold War opened new opportunities for them to act. The next two sections elaborate our framework for understanding why actors become recognized as governors and how they go about their work. We outline five types of authority that might engender deference to governors of various kinds, allowing them to govern. We also unpack governance tasks to facilitate understanding of relationships among governors as they work to affect outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the dynamics of global governance and its impact on both the authority of governors and governance outcomes. Exogenous shocks can certainly change governors and governing arrangements, but our interest here is in sources of change endogenous to governors and governing. We identify and discuss several such sources of change: tensions or synergies among sources of authority within a governor, cooperation or conflict among governors, and governing performance. Finally, we describe the organization of the book. Early chapters apply the aforementioned framework to understand dynamics in authority of governors

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[2] With this focus, we build on the diverse work on transnational activists, corporations, private authority, and international organizations that shares our interest in agents other than states. A sampling includes Keck and Sikkink (1998); Cutler *et al.* (1999); Hall and Biersteker (2002); Barnett and Finnemore (2004). See also Büthe (2004).

themselves – how governors emerge and how their authority changes over time. Later chapters focus on effects of these governors on changing governance outcomes.

Bringing agents into global governance: structural changes and the poverty of statism and functionalism

Thinking of the structure of global politics as a complex web of relationships among different authorities, accomplishing different tasks and dependent on one another for outcomes, is a stark departure from the imagined world of billiard ball-like states or stratified levels of analysis that has dominated international relations theorizing. The assumption that the global political system is constituted by unitary, instrumental states and structured by the distribution of power among them has made an analyst's life easy. It strips away the many pesky and distracting sideshows on the world scene. It makes the very messy world "legible" and comprehensible to both scholars and policymakers, facilitating grand theory for the former and statecraft for the latter (Scott 1998, 1–18). The risk, of course, for analysts, policymakers, and citizens is that simplification gets things wrong and is a poor guide to comprehension and action.

Our contention is that these simplifying assumptions – unitary, asocial, instrumental states, constrained only by the distribution of state power – strip away much of what is essential for understanding contemporary politics. Perhaps it told us more in the 1980s when these theories were developed, but structural changes over the past quarter century have empowered new actors in new ways, undermining the utility of these assumptions. Four such changes have been particularly important: globalization; the privatization/deregulation revolution; new technologies; and the end of the Cold War.

Structural changes

Globalization, or the shift in the spatial reach of social action and organization toward the interregional, intercontinental, or global scale, has undermined the correspondence between social action and the territory enclosed by state borders (Held and McGrew 2000, 3). Globalization is commonly associated with the global economy but its reach extends beyond economic issues. Environmental issues, particularly problems

such as global warming, join together the fates of people across the globe (Mathews 1989). Ideas about human rights have become platforms for social connections between people across the globe and have served as an impetus for military intervention (Finnemore 2003). Even security has become identified with humanity, as analysts, activists, and states develop and implement conceptions of "human security" (Paris 2001).

The Thatcher- and Reagan-led *privatization* and *deregulation* revolution has compounded this change in the relations between states and social power. Starting in the 1980s, states, led by the most powerful, began systematically to cut economic actors free from state control in hopes of improving economic performance. States transferred public enterprises and state functions to private actors, and increasingly encouraged private actors to finance policies such as education, municipal services, and even security, which had once been the exclusive responsibility of states (Feigenbaum *et al.* 1998; Avant 2005). This faith in the rationality of markets also led states to loosen regulation of economic activity and increasingly other social activity as well. While we can debate the wisdom of such policy and its impact on the economic growth of a variety of individual states, there is little doubt that it has increased the role of nonstate actors across the board: in economic, social, and security realms.[3] Although global economic growth has exploded in the past twenty-five years, states' ability to control or regulate it has diminished, while nonstate actors' efforts to shape or tame it have increased.

New technologies facilitated globalization by easing communications, population flows, and the interchange of ideas. Information technologies such as the internet and cell phones, global media, and the ease of air travel have often had mixed effects, particularly on state capacity relative to that of other global actors. The same technology that enabled corporations in the United States to outsource computer support to India (challenging the ability of the US government to affect its labor market) also allowed communication among Al Qaeda operatives. Cell phones are both essential tools of global business and vehicles for popular dissent in places like the Philippines and Burma. New technologies have also enhanced the capacities of states. They allow the creation of ever more sophisticated communications,

[3] But see Weiss (1998) and Drezner (2007).

weapons systems, and infrastructure support, yet each innovation also brings with it new vulnerabilities that can be exploited by those with technological expertise.

Finally, the *end of the Cold War* further fueled global change. The halt of major conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union loosened the restraints on international activity that had been imposed by the superpower deadlock. In a wide variety of social, political, economic, and security realms, activists and organizations began to push for change. The way the Cold War ended, with the triumph of the United States and the liberal model, bolstered the credence of the privatization and deregulation ideas prominent in the United States and emboldened many (generally US-supported) international organizations to drop Cold War-style "impartiality" and push for liberal, capitalist change.[4] The resulting expansion of global markets and democracy has been dramatic. At the same time this wave of change empowered a variety of actors to press for increased human rights protection, to work to restrict the spread of conflict, and to promote attention to issues of global concern. It also inspired others to take action to counter some of these activities. As Clifford Bob discusses in this volume, international efforts to restrict the flow of small arms caused transnational gun rights groups to mobilize to resist these restrictions. More deadly has been the rise of networks such as Al Qaeda to resist what they claim to be the imposition of Western cultural and economic practices on the Islamic world.

The poverty of statism and functionalism

State-centric frameworks do not capture these changes and functionalist assumptions, while useful as a starting point, provide only limited help in understanding variation in the actual governance that goes on in the world today. Only a small fraction of global governance activity involves state representatives negotiating only with one another. Decisionmakers and participants in governance are much more diverse, partly because of the trends in globalization, deregulation, privatization, and technological change, which have empowered

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[4] Thus, some think of global governance as a liberal political project. For discussion, see Ba and Hoffmann (2005), p. 4.

nonstate actors. The process is also far more contested and political than the functionalists suggest and functionalist assumptions alone cannot explain the variation we see in global governance. Global needs do sometimes give rise to governance arrangements but on many global issues, governance mechanisms have not emerged. Even where governance exists, functionalism tells us little about which of many possible arrangements will prevail and whose "needs" it will meet. Much of the literature on global governance equates it, implicitly or explicitly, with the provision of global public goods. Practitioners complain, however, that governance outcomes are frequently disconnected from both the public *and* the good. Complaints about global inaction on climate change and lack of access to HIV/AIDS medicines are two prominent examples. The lack of regulation that led to the 2009 global financial meltdown is another.

Global governance does not unfold naturally or smoothly toward a unique equilibrium. Governance, where it occurs, is the result of a political process and is shaped by power, access, mobilization, leadership, and other political variables. These political variables are important for determining what is noticed as a global problem as well as which solution is chosen to address it. Rules and institutions are sometimes locally stable and resistant to change even when they prove to be dysfunctional from a larger environmental perspective. Governors and their environments, both international and local, also may co-evolve as their interaction changes actors' values, identities, and preferences (March and Olsen 1998; Gutner, Mundy, and Cooley, this volume). So, while governors frequently make appeals to global needs in their bid for power, knowing global needs is rarely enough to explain how and why a particular governance outcome was chosen.

Perhaps the most pervasive assumptions surrounding global governance are normative. Many analysts assume that global governance is "a good thing." When we speak of it, we link it to activities with a decidedly positive aura: cooperation, problem-solving, providing public goods. These are all things we like; indeed, they are all things that are hard to oppose. Linking global governance to these activities disposes us to think of *any* governance as good in and of itself. Often this bias is built into the very definition of the term. Consider, for example, one of the most widely circulated and accepted definitions that the UN Commission on Global Governance has provided. The Commission (1995, 2) defines global 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 cooperative action may be taken." Governance here is equated with "cooperative action" but any political observer knows that governance is not always cooperative. Power, in its various forms, may make "cooperative action" hard to distinguish from exploitation or domination (Barnett and Duvall 2005). Furthermore, diverse interests are not always accommodated. In some cases they lead to competition, even conflict, within governing arrangements.

Investigating the diverse actors who govern helps foreground some of these normative issues by alerting us to the varied normative agendas governors might bring to their work. Our focus on the relationship between governors and governed highlights issues of accountability, which frequently dog global governance arrangements. In the case study chapters, and particularly the conclusion, we consider the troubling, if sometimes unintended, consequences of governance as well as its benefits.

Jettisoning statist and functionalist assumptions does not require throwing out all of IR theory. Once we conceptualize the variety of actors in world affairs, many traditional IR theories – as well as theories from comparative politics – prove quite useful for understanding the dynamics of authority and governing outcomes. Insights from the literatures on alignment, coalition building, cooperation, strategic interaction, ideas and norms underpin many of our chapters.

Rethinking agency in governors

New tools are needed to understand and investigate governors and their effects on social life, and we develop these in the next section. Our conceptual framework is based on governors' *authority relationships* with those whom they govern, their relationships with one another, and the tensions and synergies in these relationships that might produce stability or change. Governance does not require coercion. What is striking about the breadth and depth of current governance arrangements in the world is that many, probably most, of these are not obviously or explicitly backed by force. Governors may have coercive powers and may use them at times, but more often the governed actually accept the governors' authority in some fashion. Understanding

the nature of this authority and how it works must be at the center of any understanding of governors.

Governors can also exercise leadership and creativity, two terms that are oddly absent in most discussions of global governance. Put in social science jargon, governance is not simply the result of structural constraints; it is also the result of generative agents. It can be *transformational and innovative* rather than simply prohibitive (McNamara, this volume). Governance involves the creation of new issues, new interests, new communities, and new modes of action by creative agents. Governors can gain acceptance from those they seek to lead by offering attractive new ideas, formulating new strategies, and persuading people of the importance of new social goals. While states may have advantages in coercion, they have no monopoly on these other aspects of governance. Leadership and creativity have many sources.

Understanding governance as more than just rule-enforcement or the provision of order encourages consideration of more kinds of governors and of how they do their work (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992, 4–5). The exercise of authority, in both generative and constraining ways, is a common feature of governors. Different governors draw on different types of authority, which affects their behavior vis-à-vis their constituents and one another. Thus our analysis starts with the concept of authority.

"Why are you in charge?": the nature of authority in relations between governors and governed

If organizations like the United Nations (UN), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and Exxon are all (potentially) global governors, why are they in charge? Why does anyone pay attention to them? Understanding why actors are authorities and are able to govern allows us to better understand their behaviors, relationships, and impacts.

We define authority as the ability to induce deference in others.[5] Authority is thus a social relationship, not a commodity; it does not exist in a vacuum. Authority is created by the recognition, even if only

[5] For a sampling of the rich literature on authority, see Flathman (1980); Raz (1990); Beetham (1991). Our definition and the treatment that follows draws on Barnett and Finnemore (2004), esp. ch. 2.

tacit or informal, of others. Recognizing an authority does not mean one always agrees with or likes the authority. It does mean, though, that one defers to the authority. Such deference confers power. Having a set of constituents that have signified their acceptance of an authority allows that authority to exert greater influence than would be the case if she did not have their deference.

Deference to an authority might take a variety of forms. Authority might cause actors to subordinate their own conscious preferences to the directives of the authority and thus, in Robert Dahl's (1957 and 1968) sense, get one actor to do what she would not otherwise do, but it might also have subtler effects. Authority might create new preferences in actors who were previously indifferent or at odds. It might change preferences in others who become persuaded to share the authority's views based on its moral standing or expertise. It might mobilize new or different constituencies for political action.

Deference occurs for a variety of reasons. Some actors are authoritative because of the office they hold. The President of the United States is authoritative because he or she holds that office; when that person leaves office, deference will be accorded to the next individual who holds it. Some actors may be authoritative because of inherent qualities others see in that person. Nelson Mandela, for example, has a certain amount of authority on the international stage because of his moral character and reputation. Those did not disappear when he left the presidency of his country. Actors may also be authoritative because of what or whom they represent. They may represent a respected institution, an underrepresented other, or a lofty ideal. Many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), for example, induce deference (or try to) by claiming to represent noble ideas or deserving others.[6]

The basis on which the governed defer has another side, however; it also constrains the governor. Governors cannot do just anything they want; their actions must be seen by the governed (and others)

[6] Richard Flathman (1980, 16–19) distinguishes those who are "an authority" from those who are "in authority." The former have inherent qualities that induce deference. In the realm of global governance, these might be expertise or moral/reputational qualities. Nobel Prize winners, academic experts, heroes all are authorities of this first type. The latter are actors who are "in authority" by virtue of the positions they hold. UN secretary-generals, CEOs of multinational corporations, leaders of NGOs are examples of this type.