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978-0-521-12201-6 - Who Governs the Globe?

Edited by Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore and Susan K. Sell

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## *Who Governs the Globe?*

Academics and policymakers frequently discuss global governance but they treat governance as a structure or process, rarely considering who actually does the governing. This volume focuses on the agents of global governance: “global governors.” The global policy arena is filled with a wide variety of actors such as international organizations, corporations, professional associations, and advocacy groups, all seeking to “govern” activity surrounding their issues of concern. *Who Governs the Globe?* lays out a theoretical framework for understanding and investigating governors in world politics. It then applies this framework to various governors and policy arenas, including arms control, human rights, economic development, and global education. Edited by three of the world’s leading international relations scholars, this is an important contribution that will be useful for courses, as well as for researchers in international studies and international organizations.

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## *Preface*

This project was born of shared frustration. All three of us were engaged in different research about global governance but we all were dissatisfied. Something fundamental was missing in the way academics talked about what we were seeing on the ground. Traditional theoretical apparatus could not accommodate the diversity and creativity of activity we encountered. Standard academic language could not even describe it. Academic talk about global governance was about regimes, constraints, bargaining, and principal-agent relationships. It erected sharp divides between economic and security issues. Most of it was about states or intergovernmental structures. The majority described stasis or equilibrium. Creativity and innovation were not integral to global governance talk. Neither were the complex webs of varied actors pushing change. Yet the global governance we saw in our own research across very different issue areas was remarkable for its dynamics, creativity, and variety of actors.

In 2004 we came together to found a new Institute for Global and International Studies (IGIS) at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs. At IGIS, suddenly we had adjacent offices and geography bred inspiration. In a series of conversations we began to articulate what we thought was missing in both our theory and language of global governance. We also discussed the work of other scholars who were wrestling with related issues. We contacted a number of these scholars and persuaded them to participate in an organic process of discussions and research presentations that would evolve into the current volume.

We did not start with a hard and fast framework but with a series of questions and a commitment to focus on the agents who govern. Our framework and the individual chapters grew together out of the discussions at our workshops. We are extremely grateful for the smart ideas, hard work, and deep engagement of the authors who contributed to this book. Our contributors are also noteworthy for their wit and

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good humor. It has made the process of shaping and editing this book not only intellectually rewarding but a lot of fun.

We have had much support along the way. We are particularly grateful to Elliott School's Institute for Global and International Studies (under first Debbi's leadership then Susan's) for organizing and hosting workshops. IGIS assistants Laura Barker, Jessica Krueger, and Sarah Schaffer handled all the logistics with much dedication and professionalism. The Deans of the Elliott School, first Harry Harding and then Michael Brown, gave us both their confidence and their financial commitment. The International Studies Association provided us with a generous Venture Workshop grant that supported the project in its later stages.

A number of our colleagues and graduate students at George Washington University offered insightful comments on drafts and participated in our workshops. Special thanks go to Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre, Henry Farrell, Lee Ann Fujii, Jim Goldgeier, Craig Kaufmann, Eliot Posner, Chad Rector, and Amir Stepak. At one workshop Chad Rector grew so tired of saying "Marty, Debbi, and Susan" that he dubbed us "Medusa." Medusa was very fortunate to have committed and insightful discussants for our workshops and associated panels. Thanks to Dan Drezner, Matt Hoffman, Benedict Kingsbury, Loren Landau, Duncan Matthews, Lou Pauly, J. P. Singh, Hendrik Spruyt, and Paul Wapner for very useful indepth feedback. Risa Brooks, Nitsan Chorev, and Michael Williams were not at our workshops but nonetheless provided helpful written comments on the project. As Debbi headed off to University of California, Irvine, midway through the project we also gained useful insights from students there: Benjamin Bohr (who also deserves thanks for his help with the references), Karl Kruse, Winfred Wan, and Ashley Williams. Finally, to John Haslam and anonymous reviewers thanks for both support and enthusiasm along with excellent comments that helped us improve the manuscript.