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978-1-107-05295-6 - The Return of the Public in Global Governance

Edited by Jacqueline Best and Alexandra Gheciu

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## The Return of the Public in Global Governance

Many international relations scholars argue that private authority and private actors are playing increasingly prominent roles in global governance. This book focuses on the other side of the equation: the transformation of the public dimension of governance in the era of globalization. It analyzes that transformation, advancing two major claims: first, that the public is beginning to play a more significant role in global governance, and, second, that it takes a rather different form than has traditionally been understood in international relations theory. The authors suggest that unless we transcend conventional wisdom about the public as a distinct sphere, separate from the private domain, we cannot understand the dynamics and consequences of its apparent return. Using examples drawn from international political economy, international security, and environmental governance, they argue that “the public” should be conceptualized as a collection of culturally specific social practices.

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## Acknowledgements

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This project grew out of a series of conversations about recent changes in governance practices in our two fields of study, international political economy (IPE) and international security. As we discussed both recent events and current scholarship, we were struck by the remarkable parallels in the changes that had recently been taking place in these seemingly very different areas of global life: in both IPE and international security, public actors and public concerns seemed to be on the rise. And yet the form of these new public dynamics was clearly different from what we had witnessed in the past. Evidently, these were changes worth paying attention to and exploring further.

In order to dig further into these questions, we brought together a group of international scholars in the spring of 2009 for a workshop at the University of Ottawa, who examined the changing relationship between public and private in issue areas including finance, security, global development, and the environment. Many further conversations later, this book is the ultimate product of those initial discussions.

Like any collaborative project, this book is the product of a great many minds, their dialogue and debate, and their considerable effort.

First among those we would like to acknowledge for those efforts are, of course, our contributors, who have persisted with this project through its long gestation period, commented on and contributed to the book's theoretical framework, and reworked and refined their chapters. They have produced some superb scholarship in the process.

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