

Millennium Special Forum Guidance for Contributors

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Re: Global Governance and the Theoretical Interregnum

I. Overview

The reconceptualisation of international relations as ‘governance without government’ by Rosenau in 1990 has continued to animate much discussion on the phenomena of globalisation and the purposive turn towards global governance. Global governance has been seized upon as a competitor paradigm to anarchy as a possible organising principle for understanding world politics, yet few would claim it constitutes a theory or an established field of study. Indeed, since Rosenau’s seminal contribution, global governance has become a perpetual ‘theory in the making’.

However, change may be afoot. The optimism of the liberal globalization debates of the 1990s, underpinned by rationalist interest-driven theoretical frameworks, has begun to give way to more searching lines of inquiry (Mattli & Woods 2009). Scholars increasingly aware of the limits of pluralist state-based or structuralist views of world politics have begun to call for new theories which can transcend the (often implicit) methodological nationalism which continues to inform global governance debate (Hurrell 2007; Zürn 2013). We are, in effect, in a theoretical interregnum. In order to move beyond this theoretical impasse, global governance theory would benefit from reinvigoration as a conceptual frame not only for describing the world “as it is” but also as a way of looking at the world anew.

Emergent efforts in this direction are apparent as scholars begin to probe the outer bounds of new transformational theory. Alternative frames such as polycentric, networked and experimentalist governance have begun to gain currency within IR circles, but there remains little coherence as to the state of the art in global governance theory or practice (De Búrca 2013; Ruggie 2014). Beyond the mainstream IR accounts, scholars from across disciplines focused on issues as diverse as global security, urbanisation, trade, and international communications have probed and contested the outer boundaries of methodological nationalism. However, there remains little integrative cross-thematic or cross-disciplinary collaboration explicitly focused on pooling knowledge and advancing debate on global governance theory and practice.

The demand for creative theoretical thinking has also been driven by real world events and the pragmatic consequences of rationalist theory frames. As Rosenau foresaw in 1990, world politics displays an ever greater state of turbulence. The practice of global governance is afflicted by a growing array of pathologies from multilateral gridlock, to regime fragmentation, and the proliferation of orphan issue-areas (migration and climate, to name but two) (Hale et al. 2013; Goldin 2013). For some, a reality of irresolvable interest division has descended, limiting policy options to ‘mini-lateralism’ and piecemeal efforts towards ‘good enough’ global governance. However, for others this is simply not good enough (Weiss & Wilkinson 2014). They advocate renewed attention in global governance debate to normative issues of power symmetries, value and norm conflict, in addition to dominant concerns for interest capture.

Simply put, interests do not drive behaviour alone. Effective global governance (including enforcement authority beyond the state) requires broad-based political consensus and shared standards of legitimacy. That is not to say that in the absence of political consensus, global governance cannot or does not exist. Scholars point to the potential for densely articulated legal, economic and technological arrangements to propel global governance processes forward irrespective of formal political process. In sum, there is renewed effort among both scholars and policymakers to advance towards a more systematic understanding of the fundamental nature, structure and dynamics of global governance.

II. Description/summary

Responding to this necessity, this Forum will engage with the current state of the global governance domain and propose new directions for theory-building beyond this ‘interregnum’ based on a critical review of competing descriptive, analytical and prescriptive understandings of global governance. A first generation of global governance scholarship has introduced a multiplying lexicon of descriptive terms such as regime complex, pluralist governance, constitutionalisation, global administrative law, all of which provide valuable insight into aspects of supranational governance. This collection of articles will look at global governance from a variety of perspectives with a view to advancing a generational shift towards productive inter and cross-disciplinary global governance research.

Contributors drawn from the fields of international relations, comparative politics, the environment, engineering, human rights, and the internet will employ an ‘emergent analytics’ approach to global governance theory-building based on a pragmatic concern for bridging the gap between abstract theorizing and the contextualised world of global governance in practice. Contributors are encouraged to couple empirical assessment of global governance in action with explicit theoretical engagement. Contributions will address pressing practical domains implicated in the global governance challenge, with a view to critically probing the limitations of global governance scholarship old and new, including liberal institutionalism, constructivism, and critical theory. In so doing, the Forum will spotlight how theorising global governance is currently changing, what the most important challenges are, and what a systematic way forward might look like.

III. A threefold schema: rule-making, functions and linkages

The Forum will pool scholarship from across substantive domains to generate broader cross-cutting insights for theoretically-informed research. With a view to encouraging cross-fertilisation of global governance research, we propose to develop a common platform focused on three domains: rule-making, functions and linkages. We suggest that the political

geography (and, potentially, economy) of global governance can be schematically sketched by this threefold division. Sustained attention to these three constituent parts of the world politics of global governance offers the promise of advancing debate across disciplinary and paradigmatic silos. In so doing, it can provide a platform for advancing a more problem-driven approach to major global governance challenges.

Rule-making: Tentatively, we refer to rule-making as the process of defining the essential (accepted/formal) rules of the game, which charts the formal political geography of global governance and the logical sequence of scales, hierarchies, and accepted variations from the norm (for example, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture or the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations). Rule-makers are system(s)-makers, they are the actors and institutions that, by consensus or compulsion, are authorised to establish the boundaries of governance domains and the pathways through which agency may be legitimately exercised.

Functions: In our understanding, functions are the roles actors and institutions perform in global governance (for example, stewardship, rule-making, resource mobilisation, monitoring, advocacy, diplomacy and accountability). Functions and the *modus operandi* of actors are regulated by rules operating across a series of scales from international law and standards, to regional rules-based arrangements and domestic regulatory frameworks. Functions are, in principle, relatively standardised along a continuum which allows for variation on the rule (precision may vary). The most fundamental functions are devised with a view to maintaining order in governance system(s) (for example, routinized, stable and credible organisational or diplomatic practices). However, alternative functions may also emerge in the interstices of rule-making which seek to subvert system rules (illegal activities, public bads). Functions therefore are essentially the agency element of global governance. Functions may contribute to the stability and endurance of the system. However, under alternative conditions, they may yield different systemic outcomes – including discontinuity and rupture.

Linkages: Finally, we define linkages as the structural geography of global governance where actors and institutions interface and the division of functions in global governance may occur (for instance, integrated multilateral domains, regime complexes, diplomatic embassies). At another level, we might conceive of linkages as identifying where rational strategic action and normative ideational-pull combine to produce diverse formulations of authority in global governance (in particular, with regard to mechanisms of accountability). Linkages may be more or less articulated, more or less mutually reinforcing or fragile, with important consequences for the effects of rule-making and rule-implementation (the principle of subsidiarity for example). Linkages are fundamentally connected to the Westphalian system but are not limited to it (track-II diplomatic negotiations or purposive arrangements within the ‘deep web’). They may contain within themselves the potential for generating new alternative linkages, functions and rule-systems. As with functions, the systemic impact of linkages will vary under different conditions.

IV. Coherence

This special edition engages at various levels of analysis and across disciplinary domains. The topic of global governance inherently calls for intra and interdisciplinary inquiry: affecting issues of business, health, climate, human rights, finance, and much more. In order to ensure a degree of coherence across articles, the above overview provides a broad point of departure for this special issue. The introduction will elaborate on the thematic of a

theoretical interregnum in global governance, serving to frame the project, situate the reader in the context of the global governance literature, summarise the exciting and relevant work being conducted in the field represented in this special edition, and finally identify opportunities and avenues for new directions in global governance scholarship.

As such, we request that contributors do not enter into lengthy literature reviews but rather engage at an early stage the following set of guiding questions. In particular, mapping out governance along the dimensions of rule-making, functions and linkages may allow for more generalizable propositions to be advanced regarding the drivers of global governance success and failure. The sub-list of questions provides guidance for the types of issues authors might select for discussion. We request that all authors address each of the following three sections (scholarship, political geography of global governance, and avenues for further discussion). It should be emphasised that no single author would be able, or is expected, to address even a majority of the sub-questions. Rather we anticipate that each piece will touch upon some of them.

1. Gaps in the existing global governance scholarship (specific to your substantive domain)

- What are the gaps in existing global governance theoretical frameworks, particularly with regard to explaining the particular form governance arrangements assume in reality?
- What role is there for politics and contestation operating above and below the level of the state in current debate on global governance?
- How do we explain instances of experimentation, adaptation, resistance, and bypassing of the traditional Westphalian system?
- How should we conceptualise the state in global governance and variations on the subject particular to your specific domain of expertise?
- Why is the idea of global scale compelling (or not) in your issue-area?
- What is the global in 'global' governance?
- How can a focus on normative questions of power asymmetry and norm/value conflict be integrated into global governance research?

2. Rule-making, functions and linkages (specific to your substantive domain)

- What is the role of rule-making in global governance?
- Where is agency located at different levels of global governance?
- Who are the actors and institutions engaged in the global governance arrangement under analysis and what governing policies and instruments do they have at their disposal?
- What core function(s) does the governance architecture under analysis perform and what modes of governance are best-suited to which governance functions?
- What are the functional imperatives of growing global interdependence in your issue-area (stewardship, status, monitoring & evaluation, compliance etc.)?
- What are the linkages between levels and across scales with a view to problematising questions of irreducibility and subsidiarity?
- How is the regulatory framework (of rule-making, functions and linkages) under analysis connected to power structures and how should that power be structured?

3. Avenues for new directions in global governance scholarship (specific to your substantive domain)

- How might scholars focused on examining governance in world politics draw on other disciplines in a coordinated fashion to address complex global governance challenges in your domain?
- What conclusions can we arrive at on the performance and effects of governance arrangements in your thematic and regulatory domain?
- What descriptive conceptual, but, importantly, also prescriptive, purchase can be obtained through a global governance theory-oriented lens?
- Does global governance serve a useful descriptive or prescriptive purpose when applied to highly decentralised or private forms of governance?
- How does examination of your specific regime/issue-area problematise orthodox theoretical explanations for regime origins, evolution and performance?

In addition to this common overlay, contributors will have the opportunity to present his or her contribution at a specially convened workshop at UCL Institute of Global Governance in fall 2014. Date is to be confirmed. Contributors will be joined by invited faculty and students.

V. Timeline for completion

Contributors are requested to deliver their first drafts to the convenors by the end of June 2014. It is expected that anonymous reviews will be received by September 2014, to be followed by an internal workshop at UCL. Final pieces are to be submitted to Millennium by October 2014.

VI. Article length

Individual articles should be approximately 7000 words in length (excluding bibliography).