

Global governance: poorly done and poorly understood

CRAIG N. MURPHY

We live in a world of polities of unprecedented size. The billion-plus nations of India and China dwarf any earlier centralized states and their governments rule populations as large as all humanity just 150 years ago. The population of the informal US empire—extending west to east from its military protectorates in Korea and central Europe, north to the pole, and south to its dependencies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia—is greater still. In a world of such large, incontestably real political organizations, we might wonder why so many people spend so much time investigating an even larger, but more dubious, world polity or system of global governance and the politics that influences it.

The best arguments for paying attention to the world polity are ethical and moral. This article outlines some of those arguments and then explores the ways different analysts explain the nature and origin of the global polity and the different answers they give to the moral questions raised. The most persuasive analysts emphasize that contemporary global governance (or, ‘what world government we actually have’) avoids attacking state sovereignty, favours piecemeal responses to crises, and has emerged at a time when creative intellectual leadership was not matched by courageous political leadership. Consequently, for some time to come global governance and its politics will provide an insufficient answer to the moral questions that compel us to look at what world government there is. Global governance is likely to remain inefficient, incapable of shifting resources from the world’s wealthy to the world’s poor, pro-market, and relatively insensitive to the concerns of labour and the rural poor, despite the progressive role that it recently may have played in promoting liberal democracy and the empowering of women.

Democracy, globalization, and the insufficiency of contemporary governance

The historically minded like to remind us that something like ‘global’ governance has been emerging ever since the European conquests of the fifteenth century. By 1900 the world was pretty much divided into colonies and zones of

interest of the European powers, the United States, and Japan, and a weak system of inter-imperial institutions—the gold standard, the balance of power, European international law, and the first global international organizations—regulated the whole. The moral controversies surrounding that system energized scholarly observers at the time; consider John A. Hobson's *Imperialism*. Today's controversies differ. The era of formal empire has passed and the twentieth century was, if nothing else, the century of democratization—at least *within* most countries. Not surprisingly, it is as a problem of democracy and democratic theory that questions of global governance now emerge most dramatically.

A group of Western political theorists including Noberto Bobbio, Jürgen Habermas, and, most notably, David Held, has argued that the contemporary growth of unregulated transnational economic activity undermines the democratic gains won over the last century. To restore and further the democratic project they advocate both the deepening of domestic democratic processes and the extension of democratic forms beyond the nation-state. They champion international institutions both ruled by the people and powerful enough to regulate the global markets in labour, money, goods, and ideas that have expanded so rapidly in recent decades.¹

A second important strand of moral argument for strengthened global-level governance is less concerned with globalization's undermining of substantive democracy and more concerned with the consequences of an unregulated world. A group of analysts linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have explored the limited provision of 'global public goods', understood primarily as goods that are unlikely to be provided by unregulated markets.² Many of the UNDP's arguments appeal strongly even to the most fundamentalist believers in liberal economics. It is hard, for example, to argue against the global monitoring of infectious diseases that could devastate any population in which they are introduced. Other UNDP claims are more contentious; many of the world's privileged would certainly deny that distributive justice, peace in far away lands, or the protection of the cultural property of the poor constitute 'public goods'. Nonetheless, the debate about what constitutes necessary global public goods demands empirical investigations into their provision (or, usually, their non-provision) by existing institutions of global governance.

Some find the UNDP's recent embrace of the theory of 'global public goods' a bit disingenuous. After all, the UN agency is in the business of promoting one of the least widely accepted of such 'goods'—redistributive development

¹ See especially, part 3 of David Held, *Democracy and the global order: from the modern state to cosmopolitan governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

² Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg, and Marc A. Stern, eds, *Global public goods: international cooperation in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). An important earlier study in this tradition was Ruben P. Mendez, *International public finance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). See also, Wolfgang H. Reinicke, *Global public policy: governing without government?* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1998).

assistance from the world's wealthy to the world's poor—and advocates of development assistance have reason enough to argue for the insufficiency of current efforts without embracing the liberal economic rhetoric of public goods. Even the most solidaristically inspired aid provided by social democratic governments has been shrinking over the past decade. Increasingly, the fixed amount of Northern aid to the South covers only the immediate demands of the growing number of humanitarian crises, and maybe contributes to servicing the debt incurred for earlier assistance. Over the past decade, the aid system that had grown since the last years of Second World War began to atrophy, leaving a governance deficit that contributes to the widening gap between the world's wealthy and the world's poor.³

Today, almost half of the world's population lives on under \$2 per day. Utilitarian ethicist Peter Singer reminds us that the average US or EU citizen could raise at least a dozen of these people out of their destitution simply by reducing personal consumption by 20 per cent and giving the money to Oxfam or UNICEF. Moreover, the utilitarian ethical norms to which that US or EU citizen is likely to subscribe would, according to Singer, demand that these citizens do this and probably much more to aid the world's disadvantaged.⁴ If the world's privileged were morally consistent, we might expect that the budgets of UNICEF, the UNDP, and the rest of the global development agencies to dwarf those of the Disney Corporation, the Pentagon, or the Common Agricultural Policy, and they do not.

Of course, the role of global institutions extends well beyond their service as potential conduits of the charity of the rich. Some analysts argue that the most powerful of the public institutions of global governance—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and even the World Bank—through their promotion of unregulated economic globalization, have contributed to the growing numbers of the destitute as well as to the growing privilege of the world's rich.⁵

There are even more troubling, and more widely accepted, instances of the moral insufficiency of contemporary global governance. In the one hundred days from April to July of 1994 between 500,000 and 800,000 people, including at least three-quarters of the entire Tutsi population of Rwanda were systematically slaughtered, despite a widely ratified UN Genocide Convention and ample early warning provided to the UN Secretariat and the Security Council by its own officers in the field. Analyses of the etiology of the genocide blame not only the Secretariat, the Security Council and its permanent members, but

³ Jean-Philippe Thérien and Carolyn Lloyd, 'Development assistance on the brink', *Third World Quarterly* 21: 1, 2000, pp. 21–38.

⁴ Peter Singer, 'The Singer solution to world poverty', *The New York Times Magazine*, 5 September 1999.

⁵ One of the most devastating evaluations of the impact of globalization and the market-promoting practices of the IMF and World Bank on the poor was undertaken by the Department of Social Medicine at the Harvard Medical School: Jim Yong Kim, Joyce V. Millen, Alec Irwin, and John Gresham, eds, *Dying for growth: global inequality and the health of the poor* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2000).

also the entire international aid community, public and private, which for twenty years nurtured a deeply aid-dependent regime that increasingly incited ethnic hatred and violence.⁶

The consequences of the failure to avert the genocide have mounted from year to year. The Tutsi military government that seized power to stop the slaughter went on to trigger a cascade of wars across central Africa that now involve 'some one-fifth of African governments and armies from across the... as well as perhaps a dozen or more armed groups', according to the Organization of African Unity's Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events. They go on to say,

The alliances between and among these groups, with their varied and conflicting interests, has been bewildering. The situation is further endlessly complicated by... enormous mineral resources—an irresistible lure for governments, rogue gangs and powerful corporations alike—and by the continuing problem of arms proliferation sponsored by governments throughout the world as well as a multitude of unscrupulous private hustlers.⁷

Preventing genocide and the avoidable cascading violence of regional war, finding ways efficiently to provide essential international goods that markets will never provide, and challenging globalization's sudden reversal of the twentieth-century's democratic gains, are some of the most compelling reasons for trying to understand the nebulous global polity and the governance it provides.

Ideas, regimes, global public agencies, private authorities, and social movements

When the eminent Canadian political scientist Robert W. Cox begins to describe the global governance of the 1990s he calls it a *nebuleuse*, the cloud of ideological influences that has fostered the realignment of elite thinking to the needs of the world market.⁸ Neoliberalism—Thatcherism, Reaganism, or its updated, kinder, 'Third Way' grand strategies for economic globalization—certainly is one prominent face of contemporary global governance. Cox and the many analysts who have been influenced by his work emphasize that ideological face, the institutions promoting that ideology, and the elite social forces who have been the most well-served by it. Other analysts focus on an even wider array of faces that the putative global polity presents.

If there is a global polity, then certainly its dominant ideology, now, is liberalism, both economic and political. Since the end of the Cold War, govern-

⁶ Peter Uvin, *Aiding violence: the development enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998). International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events, *Rwanda: the preventable genocide* (Addis Ababa: OAU, 2000).

⁷ *Rwanda: the preventable genocide*, pars. ES57–8.

⁸ Robert W. Cox, 'Structural issues of global governance: issue for Europe', in Cox with Timothy Sinclair, *Approaches to world order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

ments almost everywhere have embraced the market. With the one major exception of China, most governments now turn to liberal democratic principles for their legitimation, even, of course, when the large gaps remain between their principles and their practice. Nonetheless, liberal principles are far from the only norms that have power at the global level. Much of the recent scholarship on international relations focuses on the international *regimes*, the norms, rules, and decision-making procedures that states (and sometimes other powerful actors) have created to govern international life within specific realms. At the centre of most regimes lies international law, customary law for some of the oldest and most durable of regimes, and treaty law—conventions reached through multilateral negotiations—for the myriad newer regimes. In the last generation, the number of international environmental regimes has grown from a handful to hundreds. International regimes affecting virtually every major industry now exist, and they grow in complexity from year to year.⁹ Moreover, a host of post-Second World War and post-Cold War regimes exist that effectively limit the sovereignty of many states—everything from the IMF and the World Bank's requirements for financial probity to the western European and American conventions that demand democratic governments within the region.

Most of us who teach global governance have experienced the sceptical or pitying looks of undergraduates when they hear us speak about the *nebuleuse* of neo-liberal ideas or the welter of multilateral regimes that we claim share in the governance of global society. To our students these analytical constructs have much less of the solid reality of 'the Pentagon', 'the Treasury', or any of the other governing institutions that they hear about daily on television and in the newspaper.

Unfortunately, because they do hear about them on the daily news, our students, and other relatively well-informed citizens, are likely to invest the world organizations—the WTO, the UN and its constituent parts—with a bit too much reality, forgetting that they too, at bottom, constitute agreements among their state members. Certainly, some global institutions are increasingly powerful and secretariats can develop as much autonomy from their state members as the managers of large firms can have from their shareholders and corporate boards. Moreover, because global organizations create most of the multilateral forums where regimes negotiated, because they help identify the common interests that become the bases for new regimes, and because these states often give secretariats the responsibility for monitoring compliance, international organizations do provide one of the best sites for beginning an investigation of global governance. Nonetheless, they usually remain the creatures of the most powerful of their state members.

In the early 1970s Robert Cox and Harold K. Jacobson organized classical sets of case-studies that reveal the real, but limited and specific autonomous

⁹ Oran R. Young, *International governance: protecting the environment in a stateless society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); John Braithwaite and Peter Drahos, *Global business regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

powers of the major world organizations—the IMF, World Health Organization (WHO), International Labor Organization (ILO), and so on.¹⁰ A generation later, Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek led a European Consortium for Political Research project to update the results. Their conclusion: ‘globalization and regional integration are not associated with a clear cut growth in the autonomy of international organizations’.¹¹ Some organizations have gained; some have lost. Many of those that have gained—organizations promoting the conservation of the environment, the protection of political rights, and the opening of markets, as well as the losers—notably, the ILO—correlate with the issue areas in which the number of regimes have exploded in recent decades, as well as with the post-Cold War elite consensus identified by Cox and others.

What is really new about global governance in the last decade is neither a shift in power from states to global intergovernmental organizations nor the kind of explosion of international conventions in which a change in quantity (the number of new regimes) has meant a change in quality (the locus or nature of global power). Yet, there has been a fundamentally new development: global-level ‘private’ authorities that regulate both states and much of transnational economic and social life. These include

- private bond-rating agencies that impose particular policies on governments at all levels¹²
- tight global oligopolies in reinsurance, accounting, high-level consulting that provide similar regulatory pressure
- global and regional cartels in industries as diverse as mining and electrical products, and
- the peculiar combination of oligopolistic regulation, ad hoc private regulation, and non-regulation that governs global telecommunications and the Internet.

Some analysts add the increasing authority of

- internationally integrated mafias, and
- a narrow group of economists who define the norms of that profession and thereby regulate the treasury ministries, the most powerful of the intergovernmental agencies, and the private institutions of financial regulation that want to adhere to economic orthodoxy.¹³

¹⁰ Robert W. Cox, Harold K. Jacobson, et al., *The anatomy of influence: decision making in international organizations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973).

¹¹ Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek, *Autonomous policy making by international organizations* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 5.

¹² Timothy J. Sinclair, ‘Passing judgement: the credit rating processes as regulatory mechanisms of governance in the emerging world order’, *Review of International Political Economy* 1: 1, 1994, pp. 133–59.

¹³ Susan Strange includes the last two of these forms of regulation in her wide-ranging, *The retreat of the state: the diffusion of power in the world economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which provides one of the best introductions to this literature along with A. Claire Cutler, Virginia Haufler, and Tony Porter, eds, *Private authority and international affairs* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

Private global regulations include environmental and labour standards adopted by companies that then have private accounting or consulting firms to monitor product and workplace compliance. Arguably, these regulations are more significant than some current intergovernmental regimes that have the same purpose.¹⁴

John Braithwaite and Peter Drahos's massive empirical study of the range of regulatory regimes that currently impinge on global businesses makes the further point that much of the impetus for contemporary public international regulation comes from transnational interest groups, including associations of progressive firms attempting to impose the same costs for environmental and social standards on their competitors, and, of course, traditional consumer groups, labour groups, environmentalists, and so forth.¹⁵ Much of that scholarship details the roles played by transnational social movements in the development of international regimes in both promoting and responding to the recent wave of globalization.¹⁶ Analysts point to a long history of such involvement. Social movements have been among the most prominent inventors of regimes and integration schemes ever since Friedrich List organized German businessmen to champion the early nineteenth-century customs union. Moreover, as Braithwaite and Drahos emphasize, in periods like ours, when new lead industries emerge and when the scale of businesses of all kinds is growing, relatively egalitarian social movements—women's movements, democracy movements, consumer movements—find unusual opportunities to contribute to the creation of relatively progressive regulation of the new, more global, economy.¹⁷

Our own period also is characterized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) playing a further essential role in international governance. Increasingly, as a consequence of neoliberal marketization, the services once provided by public intergovernmental organizations are now contracted to private, non-governmental, often 'social movement'-style, organizations. Today it is, more often than most of us realize, NGOs which run the refugee camps, provide disaster relief, design and carry out development projects, monitor and attempt to contain the international spread of disease, and try to clean up an ever more polluted environment. Moreover, most of them do so primarily with *public* funds from major donor governments and intergovernmental organizations, officially enamoured of the efficiency of NGOs and the 'empowerment' that they foster, but also, many analysts suspect, because NGOs provide these necessary international public

¹⁴ See Craig N. Murphy, 'Leadership and global governance in the early twenty-first century', *International Studies Review* 1: 1, 1997, pp. 25–49. Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, pp. 237, 280.

¹⁵ Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*.

¹⁶ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco, eds, *Transnational social movements and global politics: solidarity beyond the state* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997); Peter Waterman, *Globalization, social movements, and the new internationalisms* (London: Mansell, 1998); Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte, and Marc Williams, *Contesting global governance: multilateral economic institutions and global social movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Nitza Berkovitch, *From motherhood to citizenship: women's rights and international organizations* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Mary K. Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl, eds, *Gender politics in global governance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

¹⁷ Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, ch. 25.

services on the cheap.¹⁸ The shift to the public funding of private NGO relief and development efforts has allowed donor aid budgets to remain stagnant or even fall throughout the post-Cold War era, even though the number of humanitarian emergencies and the numbers of those in absolute poverty have grown.

The global polity, then, is all these things: neoliberal ideology with its worldwide significance, a growing network of both public and private regimes that extends across the world's largest regions, the system of global intergovernmental organizations, some of which are relatively autonomous and powerful, and transnational organizations both carrying out some of the traditional service functions of global public agencies and also working to create regimes and new systems of international integration.

Explaining how we ended up with the world polity we have

Conventional wisdom tells us that we often get the government we deserve. Political science tries to find additional explanations. Different schools of social scientists seem to have different pieces of the overall puzzle as to why we have what we have. Unfortunately, so far few have attempted to put those pieces together to give us the complete picture.

James N. Rosenau, one of the most distinguished students of international politics and someone who has triggered the recent renaissance of scholarship on the global polity,¹⁹ emphasizes the role of private transnational associations, linking the strong evidence of the growing empowerment of such groups to the material attributes of contemporary globalization. A world in which transformations in telecommunications have lowered the costs of political education and created opportunities for more and more subgroups to work with one another is a world of increasingly skilful citizens able to act both above and below the levels of traditional national politics.²⁰ Rosenau both captures and explains the unusual global political turbulence of the last decade, the 'fragmentation' or 'glocalization' of politics as new social alliances find new political opportunities in spaces above and below existing states. He seems less capable of explaining why so much of this creative movement in world politics seems to have added up to the supremacy of the neoliberal agenda both within and across states.

Sociologists of the Stanford University-centred 'world polity' school have paid more attention to this development, arguing that the social institution of cross-border citizen to citizen cooperation—international NGOs and trans-

¹⁸ Thomas G. Weiss has spearheaded the two most important studies of this phenomenon. See Weiss and Leon Gordenker, eds, *NGOs, the UN, and global governance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996); and Thomas G. Weiss, ed., *Beyond UN subcontracting: task sharing with regional security arrangements and service providing NGOs* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

¹⁹ The key work was the collection he edited with Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Governance without government: order and change in world politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

²⁰ See especially, James N. Rosenau, *The United Nations in a turbulent world* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992); 'Governance in the twenty-first century', *Global Governance* 1: 1, 1995, pp. 13–44; and *Along the domestic-foreign frontier: exploring governance in a turbulent world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

national social movements—is an expression of liberal norms, a coevolving social construction based on those norms.²¹ Xiaowei Luo has even argued that if one looks at the evolution of technology-focused organizations, we can see a transformation of the global liberal culture away from a free-market fundamentalism characteristic of the nineteenth century towards a ‘social development’-style liberalism similar to that underlying the UNDP’s broad calls for the improved provision of global public goods.²² Luo would no doubt object to the characterization of the contemporary global polity as one dominated by a relatively fundamentalist version of neoliberalism.

Other social constructivists, for example, political scientists Martha Finnemore and John Ruggie, might disagree.²³ Yet, they would share with Stanford school the same fundamentally rich understanding of global institutions as dialogical phenomena, as states of affairs created by international actors in their interaction. What becomes central, for the social constructivists, is the understanding that state leaders have of the way in which their commitments to each other constrain or enable their own action. In the world of socially constructed international institutions, persuasive communication matters. State leaders, global businessmen, non-governmental activists, even the occasional international relations scholar, influence each other’s understanding of their own ‘interests’ and of the moral and social world in which they live. Liberal norms, for example, exert power not due to their inherent validity or rightness, but because they are regularly enacted within certain realms, because some international actors have become convinced of their rightness and validity.

Perhaps because political scientists like Ruggie and Finnemore are drawn to focus on entire networks of social communication in which state interests become identified and defined, they are apt to see a range of significant actors within the world polity. Perhaps even more than Rosenau, these scholars recognize that, despite the real diffusion of power above and below the state (and to private agencies at all levels), powerful states remain the most significant sites of consolidated power over people and territory in the contemporary world.

As Cox would argue, it is in the most powerful of state agencies (the Treasuries) and in the most powerful clubs of states (the WTO, IMF, and World Bank) that neoliberalism is triumphant. Certainly it matters that global norms have an impact on and help to construct national interests, just as it matters that some inter-governmental agencies and private institutions are increasingly powerful, but we are not going to be able to explain the nature of global governance without understanding the ways in which powerful states construct and pursue their grand strategies.

²¹ John Boli and George M. Thomas, *Constructing world culture: international nongovernmental organizations since 1875* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 1999).

²² Xiaowei Luo, ‘The rise of the social development model: institutional construction of international technology organizations, 1856–1993’, *International Studies Quarterly* 44: 1, 2000, pp. 147–75.

²³ Martha Finnemore, *National interests in international society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); John Gerald Ruggie, *Constructing the world polity: essays on international institutionalism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Finnemore's and Ruggie's kind of historically rich social constructivist analysis has not been the one most frequently applied to the problem of state-to-state cooperation in recent years in the United States (and, to a lesser extent, in the former West Germany) where a great deal has been learned from rationalist studies of regime formation. Robert O. Keohane's, *After hegemony: cooperation and discord in the world economy*, a truly paradigmatic work, influenced much of this analysis. One of Keohane's central insights is that even when states share potential interests they often need to form intergovernmental institutions to serve them; intergovernmental regimes are, most often, an active form of cooperation that allow states to pursue non-zero-sum games. Based on this insight, analysts have been keen to employ a variety of rationalist models from liberal political economy and strategic game theory in order to explore questions about the relationship between domestic politics and international cooperation, the likelihood of regimes forming to govern different problems, the potential role of knowledge and knowledge elites in promoting particular cooperative solutions, and the lessons that can be learned from the history of regime formation looked at through a rationalist lens.²⁴

Analysts from the developing world are quick to point out the limits to all of the explanations so far mentioned. As South African Peter Vale argues, the intricacies of state-to-state cooperation are of little relevance to the vast majority of Africans, eastern Europeans, and others whose states have broken down and for whom the arrival of global liberalism and the increased influence of multilateral institutions has meant only the intensification of 'market-driven poverty'. The moral issues raised by the contemporary problems of global governance, Vale asserts, simply cannot be understood within conceptual frameworks that focus on states and ignore the fundamental conflicts between the privileged and the world's marginalized people.²⁵ Significantly, one realist scholar working within the rationalist framework has argued that even some of the most widely touted regimes formed among the most privileged nations—NAFTA and the European Monetary System—amounted to coercive impositions upon Canada's Liberals and on southern European governments of the centre and left.²⁶ The dean of realist international political economy in the United States, Princeton's Robert Gilpin, is blunter, arguing that if there is anything that looks like liberal global governance it is an expression of the power and preferences of the United States.²⁷

²⁴ A basic reading list in this tradition would include Robert O. Keohane, *After hegemony: cooperation and discord in the world economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer, and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of international regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Helen V. Milner, *Interests, institutions, and information* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Oran R. Young, *Governance in world affairs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

²⁵ Peter Vale, 'Engaging the world's marginalized and promoting global change: challenges for the United Nations at fifty', *Harvard International Law Journal* 36: 2, 1995, pp. 283–94.

²⁶ Lloyd Gruber, *Ruling the world: power politics and the rise of supranational institutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁷ Robert Gilpin, *The challenge of global capitalism: the world economy in the 21st century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Yet, it is certainly not *just* that. Susan Strange devoted much of the last years of her life demonstrating that the US and western European governments shared the responsibility for giving up state power to the global market through a series of 'rational', short-term self-interested decisions with consequences recognized as disastrous by at least some political leaders on both sides of the Atlantic.²⁸ Moreover, the social forces that have continued to back the neoliberal agenda are truly transnational, which implies that to understand contemporary global governance we need to develop a class analysis that transcends national boundaries. Kees van der Pijl and a number of other scholars who John M. Hobson inelegantly, but probably accurately, calls 'orthodox neo-Marxists' has begun to develop such an analysis.²⁹ Yet, I doubt that any of us (for I am one of this group) would argue that we have it quite right. If there is an emergent global, non-state specific capitalist class, it is certainly evolving along with American power and the institutions of global governance.³⁰ The global polity is not simply a superstructure responding to the interests of an already differentiated global ruling class. Global governance is more a site, one of many sites, in which struggles over wealth, power, and knowledge are taking place.

It may be more accurate, or at least less controversial, to argue that contemporary global governance remains a predictable institutional response not to the interests of a fully formed class, but to the overall logic of industrial capitalism. 'Economic globalization', understood as industrial capitalism's pressure towards larger and larger market areas, necessarily means that at some points the real economies will escape the boundaries of states, as the global economy has today. Contemporary observers are bound to see such moments as representing 'triumphs of the market' over the state, but, no doubt, at the same time there will be simultaneous pressure to establish new institutions of governance at a 'higher', more inclusive level, at least at the level at which new markets have developed. Historians of intergovernmental organization and international integration note that for the last two centuries at least, the ideology most often used to justify new, powerful, and autonomous international institutions has been a kind of 'scientism', the argument that there are socially beneficial, technical tasks that should be handed over to 'experts' to be done for us. Thus, Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair argue, almost all of the partial explanations we have for global governance implicate one or more of 1) the unfolding

²⁸ Strange, *The retreat of the state*.

²⁹ Kees van der Pijl, *Transnational classes and international relations* (London: Routledge, 1998); John M. Hobson, *The state and international relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 128–33; William I. Robinson and Jerry Harris, 'Towards a global ruling class? Globalization and the transnational capitalist class', *Science & Society* 64: 1, 2000, pp. 11–54; Craig N. Murphy, *International organization and industrial change: global governance since 1850* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

³⁰ Arguably, some of Karl Deutsch's empirical work on the evolution of transnational social classes during periods of international integration was more sophisticated than anything we have developed in recent years. See Deutsch, et al., *Political community in the North Atlantic area: international organization in light of historical experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

of professional expertise, 2) marketization, and 3) the material infrastructure—the communication and transportation networks—that make globalization possible.³¹

What is to be done?

This brings us right back to questions of democratic theory: must globalization inevitably be accompanied by the anti-democratic government of ‘expertise’ or by the non-government of marketization at ever more inclusive levels? Are, as Ian R. Douglas argues, ‘globalization’ and ‘governance’ simply two inseparable aspects of the modern project of elite control?³² Is it possible to marshal the egalitarian forces that Rosenau correctly sees as being empowered by the technologies of globalization to create a democratic system of global governance that would both prevent repetition of the tragedies of the post-Cold War decade and provide essential goods that global markets will not provide?

Much of the recent analysis of these questions has focused on the system of global intergovernmental organizations, on impediments to the transformation of the UN family of agencies and the newer, non-UN, WTO. A recurrent theme in the pages of the relatively new international public policy journal *Global Governance* is the ubiquitous impediment of US foreign policy. Throughout the 1990s, the US gave rhetorical support to a variety of innovations in global governance from expanded humanitarian operations, to the vast agenda of the Beijing women’s conference, to the creation of the International Criminal Court. Yet, perhaps more often than not, US action has not matched its words, preventing Security Council action in Rwanda, refusing to adhere to the land mines’ ban and criminal court agreements that it had originally championed, and failing, year after year, to pay its UN dues. Moreover, as long-time senior UN staffer Erskine Childers argues, the Bush and Clinton administrations have been the 1990’s most consistent and powerful advocates of marketization and a system of global governance promoting ‘market democracy’, a phrase that earns Childers’s characteristically acid comment:

If I may ask in an Irish way, what in the name of God is ‘market democracy’? Thirty years ago the phrase would have been strongly challenged as the intellectual rubbish that it is—or the insidiously undemocratic trickery that it also is.³³

Perhaps more constructively, Childers’s colleague John Washburn (once the senior US citizen in the international civil service), carefully explains why US political culture and institutions assure that the country will remain an inconsistent leader and, ultimately, an obstruction to the strengthening and democratization

³¹ Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair, ‘The emergence of global governance theory’, in Hewson and Sinclair, eds, *Approaches to global governance theory* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

³² Ian R. Douglas, ‘Globalization as governance: toward an archaeology of contemporary political reason’, in Aseem Prakash and Jeffrey A. Hart, eds, *Globalization and governance* (London: Routledge, 1999).

³³ Erskine Childers, ‘The United Nations and global institutions: discourse and reality’, *Global Governance* 3: 3, 1997, p. 272.

of global governance. Washburn's advice is to ignore the US, to let the UN and those who advocate its strengthening and democratization to 'look after themselves'.³⁴

Arguably, the International Criminal Court Treaty and the Ottawa Convention on Landmines are successful demonstrations of this strategy. Both are significant extensions of international humanitarian law promoted by the political leadership of close US allies and non-governmental movements with deep ties inside the US, but achieved over the opposition of the US government. There is also reason to believe that both innovations can have most of their desired effects even without US adherence.³⁵ The strategies used to achieve both treaties suggest that it is possible, in some fields, to nullify the impact of the United States' separation of powers and history of isolation that gives its legislators the power and desire to block democratic extensions of global governance.

Unfortunately, few of the conventions needed to establish a more powerful and more democratic form of global governance can be designed that cleverly. Where significant corporate interests are likely to be implicated, where real attempts are being made to control lucrative global markets—as, for example, in the most far reaching of the environmental regimes proposed at the 1992 Rio Conference—the 'indispensability and indefensibility' of US policy, as some analysts have called it, is likely to remain.³⁶

Many rationalist analysts—whether neorealist or neoliberal—would leave it at that. If the strengthening and democratization of global governance are not in US interests, then there is no particular point in pursuing such goals until the relative power of the US sharply declines. If the most powerful economic interests oppose such developments, it is difficult to imagine how they can be pursued successfully.

Social constructivists recognize that interests are never given; they are historically embedded, enacted social structures, subject to rethinking and enacting differently. Not surprisingly, much of John G. Ruggie's work as Assistant UN Secretary General has been to support Kofi Annan's effort to convince American and global corporate leaders to change what they understand as their own 'interests' relative to the UN's agenda.³⁷ Towards that end, the Secretariat sponsored a superb study by the University of British Columbia's Mark Zacher, to, in Ruggie's words,

³⁴ John L. Washburn, 'United Nations relations with the United States: the UN must look after itself', *Global Governance* 2: 1, 1996, pp. 81–96.

³⁵ Ramesh Thakur and William Maley, 'The Ottawa Convention on Landmines: a landmark humanitarian treaty in arms control', *Global Governance* 5: 3, 1999, pp. 273–302; Fanny Benedetti and John L. Washburn, 'Drafting the International Criminal Court Treaty', *Global Governance* 5: 1, 1999, pp. 1–38.

³⁶ Shardul Agrawala and Steinar Andresen, 'Indispensability and indefensibility? The United States and the Climate Treaty negotiations', *Global Governance* 5: 4, 1999, pp. 457–82.

³⁷ Annan lays out his goals and his reasoning in Kofi Annan, 'The quiet revolution', *Global Governance* 4: 2, 1998, pp. 121–38.

Provide business leaders and government officials as well as the public at large with a comprehensive account of the important roles played by the United Nations in facilitating order and openness in the global economy.³⁸

The far-from-radical Zacher, who has produced a series of exhaustively researched studies explaining the origin and impact of international institutions governing almost every dimension of global governance, from security, to trade, to telecommunications, to health, was in an unusually strong position to conclude that without what world government we have, ‘it would truly be “a jungle out there” for firms...that cared to venture beyond their own national borders’.³⁹

In this context, Braithwaite and Drahos’s analysis is especially significant. They begin with the reasonable assumption that transformations of global business regulation will take place in the next decade. This has happened every time there has been a leap in the scale of the world’s leading industries, that is, at every industrial divide since the Industrial Revolution. The beginning of the Information Age in the 2000s is no different from the beginning of the Jet Age in the 1950s, or the Second Industrial Revolution of the 1890s, or the Railway Age of the 1840s. The nature of that new regulation that will emerge is not preordained. Based both on the longer history of international regulation and on a close reading of changes that are more recent, Braithwaite and Drahos end their study with a set of strategies for ‘recapturing the sovereignty of the people’ over global business. This is to be done, they argue, by, on the one hand, assuring that social and environmental standards are ratcheted up, rather than down, as business becomes more global and by promoting greater, rather than less, real competition.⁴⁰

Significantly, many of the strategies they advocate have, in fact, been those employed in the 1980s and 1990s by international women’s movements and by movements pressing for global support for democratization and human rights—the two groups of egalitarian social movements that have been the most successful over the last two decades.⁴¹ Consider, for example, what Braithwaite and Drahos call ‘model mongering’, meaning the constant, experimental promotion of an ever-growing array of possible solutions to globalization problems faced by business and governments. Consider small-scale gender-based lending, reproductive freedom, primary education for women, and other elements of a quarter-century-old Women in Development agenda. These have been successfully mongered to a host of institutions whose primary concerns are not gender equity, but who have become convinced that these programmes will

³⁸ John G. Ruggie, 13 September 1999 covering letter to Mark W. Zacher, *The United Nations and global commerce* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1999).

³⁹ Zacher, *The United Nations and global commerce*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, pp. 607–29.

⁴¹ See Craig N. Murphy, ‘Egalitarian social movements and new world orders’, in William Thompson, ed., *Evolutionary world politics* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2001).

reduce poverty, minimize costs of development assistance, placate an increasingly powerful Northern women's constituency, expand consumer markets, and help clean up the environment.⁴²

Braithwaite and Drahos's strategies do not provide answers to all of the moral questions raised by today's inadequate global governance. They rely on the piecemeal, haphazard formation of global regulation. They assume no change in the institution of national sovereignty. They are based on a realistic understanding of global power in that they rely on countervailing powers and can only be employed by groups whose welfare is in some way of interest to those they call, 'the global lawmakers...the men who run the largest corporations, the US and the EC'.⁴³ It would be naive to assume that this would include every victim of the market, and it is unlikely to include any of the world's poorest and most marginalized. Yet, it is significant that this exemplary attempt to understand one part of global governance suggests some realistic hope for its improvement.

⁴² Murphy, 'Egalitarian social movements and new world orders'.

⁴³ Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, p. 629.