NORMATIVE FOUNDATION OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Globalization and global governance might be considered as parallel processes, but the idea of global governance mainly appears as a normative response to various issues. However, the most analyses on the factors transforming the function of governance by and large have ignored their normative dimension. In this paper I address the normative foundation of global governance by analyzing the transformation in world politics and the factors underlying that transformation. I argue that a notion of global governance and subsequent governance models must address that transformation in the normative structures. If the normative linkage between the territorial state and the societal space is being challenged and transformed by globalization, then the question is whether elements of global governance could provide viable mechanisms to sustain that linkage in global scale. The extent of this impact will depend on the effectiveness of emerging normative structures over the traditional structures.

Global governance debate is mainly centered on the notion of globalization and its challenges to the structures of domestic and international governance. For some analysts global governance is a remedy for a world of interdependent, overlapping spheres of authority. It is the natural consequence of the transformation from traditional state-system to a novel sphere of conduct constituted by transnational networks. The logical conclusion of this transformation is “governance without government”.1 Others refer to a special process of diverse international elements

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culminating in a situation which might be conceptualized as “governance by multiple governments”. International organizations, movements, and networks are considered as elements of a genuine sphere of governance where governments as primary actors are increasingly challenged by the imperatives of global dynamics and influenced by non-state actors in a world of expanding communication and interaction. Globalization and global governance might be considered as parallel processes, but the idea of global governance mainly appears as a normative response to various issues. However, most analyses on the factors transforming the function of governance by and large have ignored their normative dimension.

The normativeness of global governance derives from the necessity to address matters beyond the material and moral capacity of states, a necessity which led to the very idea of global governance. Thus the normative dimension of global governance is strongly related to the transforming processes of world politics contoured by forces of globalization and other related factors. In this paper I address the normative foundation of global governance by analyzing the transformation in world politics and the factors underlying that transformation. Since the emphasis is on the normative foundation, the conceptual framework of ‘normativeness’ must first be clarified. To this aim, in the first part of the paper, I present an overview of the recent debate on norms in world politics. In the second part, I examine the emerging normative structures of global governance, which gradually replace the traditional normative structures based on the state-centric system, focusing on the process of globalization, elements of global governance, and the issues where those structures are most visible. Issues that I discuss, such as regimes and international organization, have long been studied and debated in the study of international relations. My aim in this paper is less contributing to those debates than reframing the issues underlining their normative significance in the context of global governance. Accordingly, I would like to emphasize the ideational character of the inquiry since most of the arguments presented here aim to follow the idea of global governance vis-à-vis the transformations unveiling in the existing international structures.

Norms and Normativeness in Global Politics

Following the constructivist turn in IR a conception of norm has been reached whose implications are beyond and much broader than the term much used—but not equally elaborated—within the “standard” definition of

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international institutions or regimes as “standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations.” Studies in the “social” dimension of international politics allowed theorists to expand the command of norms to these social phenomena and pursue them as “social prescriptions”. The social dimension of norms is observed through the “collective” expectations of the agents, and agents’ expectations are strongly linked to the ‘identity’ of the observed agent, another concept that gained importance in constructivist theory. I emphasize the constructivist tone of the norm debate, because other prevailing IR theories, neorealism and neoliberalism, failed to develop a substantial theory of norms. This does not mean that world politics depicted by these schools is “norm-less.” In fact, there is no such world. It means they did not elaborate the prescriptive domain large enough to contain causal and constitutive effects of norms together since they subscribed to a certain ‘logic of anarchy’ that inhibited norms from playing a significant role as they do in ‘hierarchical’ domestic structure. Thus the international arena is characterized chiefly by the absence of central authority that would enforce rules or resolve clashes among the individual states. Realists emphasize the salience of material capabilities in international affairs and downplay norms to a mere collection of rules which mimic domestic rules without having their authority and totally contoured by underlying power relations among the states. For realists, the logic of self-help that characterizes international politics prevent states from adopting a normative structure independent of their strategic choices that are configured chiefly to respond to structural challenges. Realists emphasized the role of power in the foundation of regimes and institutions, and their instrumental value as means of exploitation of political and economic resources of others.

The theory of international relations developed by Bull somewhat challenged this particular logic of anarchy promoted by realists. Bull called his work The Anarchical Society, implying that while international realm might be anarchic, it is also a society—a society of states sharing certain common interests and common values, conceiving themselves bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another. By coining the term of

International society,’ Bull opens the way to understand international politics beyond the systemic mechanism and through common interests and values, although systemic mandate of self-calculation lies at its foundation. The concept of “international order” refers to a certain condition generated by conscientious and consensual behavior among states. Order is deeper in meaning than system in the sense that it indicates a trending inner dynamism among the constitutive elements. Accordingly, Bull argues that past international societies were all built upon a “common epistemology and understanding of the universe” based on a common culture, civilization, or religion.  

Neoliberals regard norms created by states as collective rules so as to overcome collective action problems, despite the fact that they adopt basic premises of neorealist systemic theory. Neoliberals emphasize the “egoist” rather than “selfish” nature of states, and see states as utility maximizing actors that involve in cooperation to reduce crudely the “cost” of living in an anarchic world. In this respect, states act egoistically, this means “their utility functions are independent of one another: they do not gain or lose utility simply because of the gains or losses of others”. The egoist character of states makes them all the more inclined to cooperation and institution-building. Thus, with regard to the study of norms, by characterizing the prescriptive nature of institutions neoliberals advanced one step ahead of realists. Nevertheless, their view of norms cannot reach beyond the contractual arrangements contained in the institutions or regimes. Constructivists generally criticize neoliberals for ignoring the “intersubjective” quality of international regimes by not giving adequate attention to the essence of “convergent expectations” which define the international institutions in the first place. For instance, Kratochwil and Ruggie argued that international institutions are more than what utility calculations of rational actors would address. They denoted to “shared understandings” that inform members about the right conduct in certain situations. In addition, they also operate as a cognitive source for the determination and assessment of individual behavior. Challenged by sociological and cognitive developments in regime theory, Keohane needed to emphasize the formal character of regimes and collapsed the concept of norms, rules, and principles that existed in the standard definition of regime.

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9 Keohane, *After Hegemony*, p. 27.
into a single concept of rules. He defined regimes as “institutions with explicit rules, agreed upon governments that pertain to particular sets of issues in international relations”.11

Constructivists insistently refer to the shared understandings of the agents that prescribe their behavior and also shape their identities. Cultural and institutional elements—mostly norms—are the stuff that “makes the world hang together”. Realists, preoccupied with the distribution of power, seem to ignore these phenomena. Neoliberals, on the other hand, do not question how the interests and identities of the actors are shaped in a certain way, but focus only on their consequences.12 For constructivists, however, norms as shared expectations have an intersubjective quality. This means that the prescriptive character of norms does not only affect actors’ behavior but their identities as well. In this respect, Kowert and Legro divide norms into two categories: “prescriptive accounts of actors themselves (identities) and behavioral prescriptions for the proper enactment of these identities (behavioral norms)”13 In similar vein Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein categorize norms as constitutive, norms that “specify actions that will cause relevant others to recognize and validate a particular identity and respond it appropriately,” and regulative, norms that “operate as standard for the proper enactment of deployment of a defined identity”.14 Following this line of thinking, it is not easy to differentiate certain constitutive and regulative norms. Most of norms, such as sovereignty, have double character. The essence of norms, namely their constitutive and regulative nature, can only be determined in the process. Bur for the sake of definition, constitutive norms can be exemplified as ‘friend’, ‘enemy’, ‘West’, ‘democracy’, and ‘anti-military’; and regulative norms as prohibition against the use of ‘unconventional’ weapons, human rights, arms control, multilateralism, and so on. These are some of the examples that come to mind directly, but international norms are not limited to these examples, because any prescriptive account which regulates actors’ behavior and constitutes their identities, can be counted as norms. It is also important to note that a valid norm today might not be so tomorrow, as the process of norm internalization is a complex phenomenon.


With respect to the normative foundation of global governance, the foregoing discussion suggests two important distinctions on the subject matter of norms. First pertains to the nature of norms. In her work, *National Interests in International Society*, Finnemore occasionally mentions that there is nothing inherently "good" about social norms. Shared understandings might lead to ethically "good" or "bad" actions. Thus, social norms "can prescribe ethically reprehensible behavior—slavery, violence, intolerance—as well as charity and kindness". This is a reasonable approach as social structures themselves do not attain ethical character. It also provides an additional insight into understanding the vast world of norms. For instance, most of the examples of international norms I discussed refer to 'soft' norms, as oppose to 'real world' norms such as imperialism, genocide, violence etc. Finnemore's view is problematic however as she extends the domain of ethically neutral social norms to categories other than states. It is true that norms pertaining to states are ethically neutral, as state is not a moral category. Thus it is appropriate to apply social theory so as to reach prescriptive accounts among states; but it is troublesome to employ social theory on individuals. Constructivism is not a moral theory. It cannot account for the prescriptive domain that influences an individual's identity and interest. That domain might consist of various subjective—and not necessarily intersubjective—factors.

The 'stuff of a normative structure, norms, may be social or ethical in nature. It is not always clear what nature a norm is made of. The prescriptive character of norms, however, is constant in every form. In international politics the distinction between the types of norms matters. The subject matter of 'social' norms in world politics is the state. The subject matter of 'ethical' norms is the individual human being. Of course, an international norm could be 'ethical' in nature, but only when it pertains to human beings. The difference between the subject matter is important, because only by acknowledging this difference we can distinguish between the normative structures pertaining to the state or the individual human being. The first type of structure generally centered on the norm of 'sovereignty' and its subsequent elements. The second type of structure is centered on the notion of 'human rights'. Both structures are visible in world politics but they are not same. Moreover, the rise of 'human rights,' as oppose to 'state rights,' makes the world politics today more interesting.

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16 Finnemore, 32.

The second distinction is about the scope of norms. In my understanding, there is a consensus among constructivists—as it is expressed in the compilation of essays in *The Culture of National Security*—that behavior and identity in their definition of norm refer to states’ behavior and states’ identity. Therefore, the unit of analysis in the study of international norms is the state. Prescriptions and constraints generated by norms are applied to the state as a corporate being to which human qualities such as identities and interests are attributed. But the notion that states and their preferences are embedded in a larger social context and that a wide variety of non-state actors are consequent in world politics is gaining importance in the study of world politics. In international relations theory, social processes other than those between states have been neglected until recently. Scholars such as Milner, Risse-Kappen, Moravcsik, and Finnemore all have emphasized the necessity of the study of domestic and transnational dynamics for a better understanding of international politics. In fact, recent studies on norms increasingly focus on social processes where individuals, interest groups, international organizations are actively involved in the courses of international norm creation, promotion, and sanctioning. Thus, growing significance of non-state actors in world politics does not only impinge on the decision-making capacity of the state but also reshapes its normative foundation. In the following section, I discuss those global dynamics which increasingly challenge the traditional normative structure of the state and diminish its normative precedence in world politics.

**Transforming Normative Structures: Globalization and Global Governance**

Globalization refers to transformation in the conception of boundary, territoriability and sovereignty as result of an increasing interconnectedness in the world in economic, political, social, and cultural issues and areas. For those who observe an inescapable phenomenon of globalization, the

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22 Finnemore, *National Interest*. 
traditional conception of a state-centric international system is increasingly being replaced by a ‘global’ order. What kind of boundary-erosing and authority-diminishing processes does the state face today? Rosenau mapped these challenges in relation to the problem of governance through a multifaceted perspective that allows us to capture the problem within a variety of aspects ranging from transnational to subnational. Rosenau conceives governance as “spheres of authority at all levels of human activity that amount to systems of rule in which goals are pursued through the exercise of control”. The scope of governance he offers is an offspring of a new era and a world where what happens in one corner or at one level may have consequences for what occurs at every other corner and level. It is a world of interdependence and “turbulence”. For Rosenau governance in a turbulent world encompasses the activities of governments, but it also includes actors who employ command and control mechanisms to take decisions and pursue policies. There is no single organizing principle around which these actors converge. It is a turbulent world in which we live today, not a world of principle. All we can say is that the processes in which these actors involve are along the line of domestic-foreign frontier and distant from local limitations. Rosenau asserts that a new form of anarchy has evolved in the global affairs in the current period, one that involves not only the absence of authority, but also the “disaggregation of authority” generated by transnational factors and cross-border activities. The result is a major shift in the location of authority, and the control and command mechanism throughout the world in economic, political, and social spheres. When the locus of effective political power can no longer be assumed to be the national governments as such, Held argues that “the idea of a political community of fate—of a self-determining collectivity—can no longer be meaningfully located within the boundaries of a single nation-state alone, as it could more reasonably be when nation-states were being forged”.

The dynamics of a ‘turbulent’ world, the shift in the location of authority, and the disaggregation, altogether create a massive problem for states. Domestic governance is challenged as the material and moral foundation of its territorial and functional base, the nation-state, is contested by globalization. For instance, Cerny argues that despite the apparent development and spread of liberal democratic state forms in the world in the 1980s and 1990s, the possibilities for genuine and effective democratic governance are actually declining. The reason for the decline is not the idea

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23 Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign*.

24 Rosenau, 145.

or ideals of democracy per se. on the whole, liberal democracy has become a major mode of governance in the modern world. But, paradoxically, its origins and dynamics sprang from the process of consolidating the nation-state, and thus it is exposed to the threats the nation-state faces today.26 These challenges to the cardinal norm of the state-centric system, sovereignty, have serious normative ramifications. Political legitimacy in the sovereign nation-states has typically been linked to the state's capacity to deal effectively with the demands and expectations of its citizens. This legitimacy is constrained because policy issues, owing to globalization and internationalization, increasingly require international agreement and collaboration and therefore are not any longer confined to the problem-solving capacity of individual nation-states. Held argues that in the face of global transformation “any conception of sovereignty which interprets it as an illimitable and indivisible form of public-power” is undermined. Vis-à-vis Rosenau's turbulent world, sovereignty today is “already divided among a number of agencies—national, regional and international—and limited by the very nature of this plurality”.27

Globalization poses a challenge to the idea of governance in general. The idea of global governance developed as a response to those challenges which are required to be addressed in global level. But for a model of governance to transcend the duality of statehood defined territorially and governance defined functionally, it is to be instituted on a normative structure that would surpass the normative foundation of traditional state-centric system. If the normative linkage between the territorial state and the societal space is being challenged and transformed by globalization, then the question is whether elements of global governance could provide viable mechanisms to sustain that linkage in global scale.

Elements of Global Governance: International Regimes

As Zacher argues,28 perhaps the entire body of international regimes—economic, security, environmental—might be considered as a system of global governance. The corpus of regimes is likely to enter a period of


proliferation as the world experiences the effects of declining effectiveness of major war, the increasing deterioration of the environment, the widening of economic interdependence, and the global spread of communications, democracy and consumer culture. In the study of international relations, regimes are generally defined as “rules, norms, and procedures” that affect or govern state behavior in certain issue-areas. Accordingly, regimes might be considered as norm-based cooperation in the international system. Global governance implies a sphere of conduct which is global in scale operated within a governance arrangement, not a government. As an array of rules and norms, regimes may play role as codes of conduct in global governance. As international regimes are different than domestic rules and laws, “international” or “global” governance is also different in nature than a domestic governance and government. Oran Young’s analysis is particularly helpful in assessing this character of regimes in the context of global governance. Young’s ongoing attempt “to present an integrated account of regime theory as a way of thinking about governance in world affairs” allowed him to develop a genuine view of regimes.\(^{29}\) He argues that one way to look into global governance is to refer to the UN system and call for a comprehensive, legally binding, and state-centered approach to international governance. He prefers the alternative approach that looks at “issue-specific arrangements that may or may not be legally binding, may or may not assign some role to the UN or its specialized agencies, and often accord important roles to non-state actors.” For Young, international regimes form a horizontal rather than a vertical or hierarchical system of public order. The result is a complex pattern of decentralized authority. This horizontal structure of governance enhances the capacity of individual regimes to survive serious failures in international order.

The significance of Young’s view of international regimes is that he conceives regimes in international and transnational categories. International regimes are institutional arrangements whose members are states and whose operations center on issues arising in international society, such as arms control and nuclear nonproliferation regimes. In contrast, transnational regimes are institutional arrangements whose members are non-state actors and whose operations are pertinent to issues that arise in global civil society, such as the use of the world wide web. Young argues that global civil society can exert influence on international regimes and international society on transnational regimes. Thus global governance appears as the combined efforts of international and transnational regimes. In respect to transnational regimes, the current theories of regimes might have

difficulties in establishing the ‘regime’ on non-state actors such as NGOs, professional groups etc.

**Elements of Global Governance: International Organization**

Another constitutive element of global governance is international organization. The idea of global or international governance is strongly related to formal organizations. International organizations such as the UN might sometimes be considered unsuccessful, but the presence of such an institution in global scale cannot be treated simply of symbolic nature. In the context of global governance, international organizations may operate not only as conduit of the contest of state interests, but also as purposive—and perhaps, supranational—actors. As Barnett and Finnemore argue, contrary to rationalistic arguments in IR, “global organizations do more than just facilitate cooperation by helping states overcome market failures, collective action dilemmas, and problems associated with interdependent social choice. They also create actors, specify responsibilities and authority among them, and define the work these actors should do, giving it meaning and normative value”. Thus, international organizations are not only mechanisms through which others (usually states) act, they are also purposive actors. Ethnographic studies of international organizations describe a world in which organizational goals are strongly shaped by norms of the profession that dominate the bureaucracy and the world in which they are embedded. International organizations acquire their autonomy and power because as embody technical rationality and control over information that are hard to find. For instance, the UN’s peacekeepers derive part of their authority from the claim that they are independent, objective, neutral actors who simply implement Security Council resolutions.

There is no doubt that the last decade or so has been a swinging period of pessimism and optimism for the UN’s role in promoting world peace and security. The UN was empowered substantially by late 1980s, particularly by the emphasis it gained through Gorbachev’s “new thinking” and positive American response to it. In the short period from 1988 to 1993, there were substantially more UN military operations—over twenty new operations were launched—than during the entire first four decades of the world organization. But, this period did not last long and was followed by a downturn. The total number of UN blue helmets and the peacekeeping budget fell by two-thirds between 1994 and 1996. The UN’s activist

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peacekeeping and peace enforcement profile had again changed under the pessimistic political air prevailed by subsequent failures or ineffectiveness of the peace operations in the last decade. So, what happened? According to Weiss et al. the end of the East-West struggle has placed the United States and its Western allies in an unusual leadership position; with their consent and political support the United Nations was theoretically able to play a growing role in maintaining international peace and security. Developing world—the former Third World—was no longer able to block effective international efforts simply because the Western industrialized countries are on the other side. But, on the other hand there were some structural problems that incapacitated the UN from the beginning. Only eight of the UN missions launched since 1988, have been in response to interstate conflict, the type against which the founders of the world organization had planned. The majority of UN operations have been primarily intrastate. The problem in the global conflict management and governance of security issues appears to be related to the fact that institutions and instruments created for these purposes have not been updated in accordance with the normative and strategic transformation in global politics. While the legal concept of sovereignty is increasingly challenged by the forces of globalization and changes in international normative structures (as observed in frequent humanitarian interventions in the last decade), necessary institutional arrangements in accordance with shifting normative priorities that would organize conflict management in global scale are yet to follow.

The normative significance of international organization shows in various ways. For instance, in their study of the evolution of women’s suffrage as a norm, Finnemore and Sikkink portray internalization of this norm as an interactive process among international organizations, such as the UN and ILO, and states. They argue that since 1948, emergent norms have increasingly institutionalized in international law, in the rules of multilateral organizations, and bilateral foreign policies. In the internalization stage, norms acquire a taken-for-granted quality and are no longer a matter of broad public debate. Women suffrage, slavery, and immunity of medical personnel during war are such institutionalized norms. For Finnemore and Sikkink the evolution of norms might be set as a three-stage process: norm emergence, norm cascade, and internalization. The characteristic mechanism of first stage is persuasion by norm entrepreneurs. Norm entrepreneurs, NGOs and international organizations such as the UN and ILO, attempt to convince a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace new norms. The second stage is characterized more by a dynamic imitation as the norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become

norm followers. A combination of pressure for conformity, desire to enhance international legitimation, and the desire of state leaders to enhance their self-esteem facilitate norm cascades. In most cases for an emergent norm to reach a threshold and move toward the second stage, it must become institutionalized in specific sets of international rules and organizations. In similar vein Cortell and Davis illustrate the reverse process in which international norms and rules, which are embodied and promoted by international organizations, affect state behavior through the actions of domestic political actors.\(^{34}\) First, governmental officials and societal actors invoke international rules to further their own particularistic interests in domestic policy debates. Second, international institution's rules become institutionalized into the domestic political process through their incorporation or embodiment in domestic laws.

**Elements of Global Governance: Global Civil Society**

Another important element of global governance is the emergence of global civil society. In their recent work, *Activist Beyond Borders*, Keck and Sikkink marked the significance of transnational advocacy networks on international and domestic structures.\(^{35}\) Global civil society is a phenomenon which is predominantly non-statist in orientation. This would automatically exclude international organizations—global or regional, whose exercise of authority remains largely dependent upon member states and whose authority replicates the bureaucratic state. Furthermore, global civil society should be distinguished from those separatist and terrorist organizations that merely seek to form new states or seize control of existing ones.\(^{36}\) The concept of civil society, however, is not limited to those groups seeking to bring about specific changes in the policies of states or practices of corporations. Indeed, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the new social movements is the attention they raise to problems that are not amenable to direct policy responses. Civil society is getting increasingly global not only because groups are establishing strategic linkages across national borders, but also because of the nature of the issues around which NGOs and social movements converge. And the way of resolving the issues also provides the global character of the civil society. Turner\(^{37}\) argues that when these groups seek

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\(^{37}\) Turner, “Global Civil Society”.
to influence direct policy and legislation within states, they are likely to do so within a global rather than parochial, national frame of reference, as suggested by the evolution of the global human rights and environmental movements. In this respect, civil society's 'shared-goals' and non-violent measures whose effectiveness lies not only in their relationship to states and international organizations but also their influence on global public opinion, may have significant impact on global governance.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The idea of global governance emerged as a normative response to challenges that significantly diminish state's governing capacity and normative precedence in the face economic, political, and cultural transformations in world politics. A notion of global governance and subsequent governance models must address that transformation in the normative structures. If the normative linkage between the territorial state and the societal space is being challenged and transformed by globalization, then the question is whether elements of global governance could provide viable mechanisms to sustain that linkage in global scale. In the area of global governance, however, the constitutive elements, such as international regimes and international organizations are created by states; and the maneuvers of global civil society can be controlled by states to a certain extent. But the influence in reverse direction, namely the impact of regimes, international organization, and civil society on state preferences and policies is also an undeniable phenomenon in world politics today. The extent of this impact will depend on the effectiveness of emerging normative structures over the traditional structures. In the absence of globalization and subsequent transformation, states would seek alternative actions if they were not significantly vulnerable to an issue observed by a certain structure of global governance. But global and also contagious character of environmental issues and the challenge of globalization in economic issues oblige states to involve in the global governance structures that are designed to address those issues. Accordingly, in the absence of normative transformation (particularly after the end of the Cold War), states' level of vulnerability in human rights issues would be considered low, because the violation of such rights in one state does not create an intrinsic challenge to another—except in the cases of ethnic relations. However, recent developments in the area of global governance, that is the increasing significance of the UN via humanitarian interventions and growing voice of the global civil society considerably raised the consideration of human rights in world politics, which had traditionally been accorded a lower priority.

\textsuperscript{38} For the potential role of religions in global governance see Richard Falk, \textit{Religion and Humane Global Governance} (New York: Palgrave, 2001).