Sovereignty and the diffusion of political authority in multinational and transnational governance

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Abstract: This article looks at the change, after World War II, in the structure of world power. Such a structural transformation brought consequences for the pattern of postwar global political and security relations. Will be analyzed how the states became wrapped in an array of global governance systems and arrangements, impacting on the concept assigned to sovereignty.

Key-words : *Sovereignty; Transnational Governance; Multilateral Governance; United Nations.*

Resumo: Esse artigo analisa a mudança, após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, na estrutura do poder mundial. Tal mudança estrutural trouxe consequências para o padrão de relações políticas e de segurança globais do pós-guerra. Nesta perspectiva, será analisado como os Estados envolveram-se em uma variedade de sistemas de governança global e arranjos, impactando no conceito atribuído a soberania.

Palavras-Chave: Soberania; Governança Transnacional; Governança Multilateral; Nações Unidas.

Introduction

This article examines the impact of the growth of multilateral and transnational governance on sovereignty and the diffusion of political authority. It begins by exploring the legacy of World War II and the building of the UN system. The rise of intergovernmentalism and transnational governance arrangements are examined followed by an assessment of some of the leading changes in the postwar global politics landscape. These issues are explored in greater depth across two cases: security and the environment. The article concludes by drawing the threads of the discussion together.

World War II and the Building of the UN System

World War II created conflict and violence on a scale that had never been witnessed before, and was an experience that would drastically reshape the global order. As Hobsbawm put it, it was a "global human catastrophe" (1994: 52). The scale of the war effort, of destruction and of human suffering was historically unprecedented. As war embraced Europe and the Far East, military hostilities raged across almost every single continent and ocean, excepting Latin America and southern Africa. Few of those states not engaged directly or indirectly in military combat could effectively remain neutral, since supplying the war effort of both the Axis (German, Italy, and Japan) and the Allied powers (United States, Britain, and France) required extensive sourcing. As McNeill notes, "transnational organization for war … achieved a fuller and far more effective expression during World War II than ever before" (1982: 356). But one of the most profound consequences of the war was the resultant transformation in the structure of world power. The year 1945 marked the end of Europe's global hegemony and confirmed the US and the Soviet Union as global superpowers. This structural transformation heralded dramatic consequences for the pattern of postwar global political and security relations.

World War II illustrated the necessity of establishing an international order capable of maintaining a just peace and global stability. Inherent in the conception of such an order was a significantly qualified notion of state sovereignty. If a rule-based order was to have any chance, then unbridled sovereignty would need to be tempered by counterbalancing forces. To that end, the very idea of sovereignty became linked to the idea of legitimate, or rightful, authority; an authority that is both recognized and regulated by the international

community. Such notions found early expression in the United Nations Charter, where sovereignty was both entrenched and balanced with certain obligations to the world at large.

The UN Charter is an extraordinary document. Its mandate could not be clearer; Article 1 explicitly states that the purpose of the UN is to "maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace …" (UN 1945). Moreover, Article I goes on to stress that peace would be sought and protected through principles of international law. It concludes with the position that the UN is to be "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends." This is particularly important for the purposes of this article since it speaks to the deliberate, facilitated interdependence that was sought by the UN. Moreover, the focus on principles of international law emphasizes the significance of the formal institutionalization of such prevention and mitigation mechanisms. By facilitating integration in this way the UN sought to replace the tendency toward unilateral military action with collective action that could still preserve central aspects of state sovereignty (Ikenberry 2001). Maintaining global peace and stability serves the obvious purpose of limiting violence, but it was also a quintessential prerequisite for accelerating economic development across the world.

While the need to create such a unified system could not have been more salient in 1945, it is important to recognize that the institutional design of the UN reflected disparate interests among the leading states. These resulted from differing contexts in the history of global power. This divide is illustrated by European states and the United States. While not discounting the casualties experienced by the United States in the conflicts of the twentieth century, these paled in comparison to the level of deaths experienced by Europeans. Europe emerged from World War II with a visceral sense of destruction and eventual relief, whereas the US emerged as the world's leading superpower and with a sense of military triumphalism. Yet, despite these different experiences, the leading powers could come together to establish the UN system (Weiss and Thakur, 2010). Moreover, they were to use this system to reinforce their positions. The codification of US dominance and the protection of the interests of other major states within the multilateral order needs to be recognized when exploring the achievements and limitations that can accurately be assigned to the UN multilateral system and, more generally, to the postwar settlement.

The titanic struggles of World War I and World War II led to a growing acknowledgement that the nature and process of global governance would have to change if the most extreme forms of violence against humanity were to be outlawed, and the growing interconnectedness and interdependence of nations recognized. Slowly, the subject, scope, and very sources of the Westphalian conception of international regulation, particularly its conception of international law, were all called into question (Bull 1977: 6; Held 1995: 4). The image of international regulation projected by the UN Charter (and related documents) was one of "states still jealously 'sovereign'" but now linked together in a "myriad of relations"; under pressure to resolve disagreements by peaceful means and according to legal criteria; subject in principle to tight restrictions on the resort to force; and constrained to observe "certain standards" with regard to the treatment of all persons in their territory, including their own citizens (Cassese 1991: 256). Of course, how restrictive the provisions of the Charter have been to states, and to what extent they have been actually operationalized, are important issues (see below).

At the heart of the changes initiated by the UN lies a conflict between claims made on behalf of individual states and those made on behalf of an alternative organizing principle of world affairs: ultimately, a community of all states, with equal voting rights in the UN General Assembly, openly and collectively regulating international life while constrained to observe the UN Charter and a battery of human rights conventions (see Held, 1995). However, this conflict is still far from resolved, and it would be misleading to conclude that the era of the UN Charter model simply displaced the Westphalian logic of international governance. The essential reason for this is that the Charter framework represents, in some notable respects, an extension of the interstate system, even though it modified it in important ways.

The rise of intergovernmentalism and transnationalism

It is, of course, commonplace to criticize the UN for the many ways it and the nations that created it have fallen short of its ideals. Yet it would be utterly mistaken to underestimate the successes wrought by the UN system overall and the geopolitical stability that followed its foundation. The decades that followed World War II were marked by peace between the great powers, although there were many proxy wars fought out in the global South. This relative stability created the conditions for what now can be

recognized as the almost unprecedented period of prosperity that characterized the 1950s onward (see Hale, Held and Young, 2013). The UN is central to this story, although it is by no means the only important institutional innovation of the postwar settlement. A year prior to the founding of the UN, the Bretton Woods organizations were established in an effort to foster economic cooperation and a prosperous global economy: the IMF and the World Bank (previously the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development). The former focused on exchange rate stability and balance of payments assistance, while the latter on long-term economic development. A sister institution, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which would later develop into the WTO, committed countries to open their borders to foreign trade. All of these institutions lay at the heart of what we now call postwar 'economic globalization' – the growing enmeshment of economies across the world through trade, finance and foreign direct investment and a sleuth of policies that facilitate economic interdependence. While the economic record of the postwar years varies by country, many experienced significant economic growth and living standards rose rapidly across many parts of the world. It was not just the West that was redefined by these developments; a global division of labor emerged which linked economic flows across large swathes of the world. In the wake of these changes, the world began to shift – slowly at first, but later more rapidly – from a bipolar toward a multipolar structure. By the late 1980s a variety of East Asian countries were beginning to grow at an unprecedented speed, and by the late 1990s countries such as China, India, and Brazil had gained significant economic momentum, a process that continues to this day.

The geopolitical stability engendered throughout the postwar years was a precondition for economic globalization, which subsequently transformed the way business and commerce were organized. Markets that were first and foremost domestic networks increasingly took on global dimensions. National economies became heavily enmeshed in the global system of production and exchange. Multinational corporations, many of which came to enjoy turnovers that dwarfed the GDP of even medium-sized nations, expanded across the globe. Financial markets exploded into a world of 24-hour trading, aided by competition between states eager to attract increasingly mobile capital flows. Economic globalization, with all its benefits and costs, winners and losers, came to embrace all regions and continents, and global interdependence deepened to a hitherto unknown degree (see Held et al. 1999).

Meanwhile, international cooperation proceeded at an impressive pace. Whereas once participation in the multilateral order was sporadic and tenuous, it became both more entrenched and regularized. The most obvious illustration of this is the rapid emergence of diverse multilateral organizations and transnational agencies. New forms of multilateral and global politics became established, involving states, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and a wide variety of pressure groups. The numbers of active IGOs and INGOs increased exponentially (UIA 2012). There was substantial growth in the number of international treaties in force, as well as the number of international regimes, formal and informal, altering the political and legal context in which states operated (Held et al. 1999: chs 1–2; Held and McGrew 2007: ch. 7). To this dense web of mechanisms of coordination and collaboration can be added the routine meetings and activities of the key international policy-making fora, including not only the UN and Bretton Woods organizations, but also the G-groups (the G5, G7, G20, etc.). Whereas in the middle of the nineteenth century there were just one or two interstate conferences or congresses per annum, the numbers increased into the many thousands each year (UIA 2012). Accordingly, states became enmeshed in an array of global governance systems and arrangements.

At the same time, new kinds of institutional arrangements have emerged alongside formal intergovernmental bodies (Hale and Held 2011). Networks of ostensibly "domestic" government officials now link with their peers across borders (Keohane and Nye 1977; Slaughter 2004b). Different kinds of actors, public and private, form partnerships with each other to tackle issues of mutual concern. And purely private actors have created an array of their own governance institutions, ranging from voluntary regulations to private arbitral tribunals (Büthe 2010). In some ways these new institutions reveal the adaptability and flexibility of global governance. But they also face significant limitations.

As forums for collaboration and engagement multiplied, they facilitated direct links between world powers, regardless of how explosive the rhetoric between them sometimes became, and opened the door for peripheral states to participate in the global order. Significantly, however, these institutions also embedded in their infrastructures and modus operandi the privileged positions of the 1945 victors. This was, arguably, a compromise needed to give incentives for great powers to participate in the new multilateral order.

The changed landscape of global politics

A number of trends can be identified within the changed landscape of world politics. First, there has been a general trend of integration between national and international political arenas (Milner 1997; Slaughter 2004b). The relationship between national governments and international bodies is not unilinear, but rather overlapping and reflexive to pressures coming from all sides (domestic constituencies, IGOs, global civil society, etc.). The two distinct spheres of traditional politics – national and international – have merged in some key respects. From global trade rules to intellectual property rights, from the global financial crisis to climate change, issues are posed for all levels of politics. A significant variety of institutional arrangements have been created in response to this trend, and this has included substantial innovation and change resulting in diverse forms of multiactor, multisectoral and multilevel governance.

However, the integration of national and international politics has also had an impact on our understanding of politics. The manner in which politics is conceived in the contemporary world can no longer be focused only on realist state-centric modes of analysis (Keohane and Nye 1974; Putnam, 1988; Moravcsik 1997; Slaughter 2004a). While this shift in perception has had its critics (Gilpin 2002), the realities of politics today gives little support for seeing the nature and form of global governance through the lens of the unitary state acting alone, despite the resilience of great power politics. The greatest issues now confronting the world are not delineated and distributed neatly along national boundaries, and neither is the debate on how to solve them. The diffusion and growth of transborder governance arrangements reflect this integration of politics in significant ways. Any other starting point simplifies the character of the form and nature of global politics and masks the nature of political relationships in the contemporary world.

A second trend that can be observed since 1945 is the emergence of powerful nonstate actors in the development of transborder governance. Nonstate actors such as INGOs, MNCs, and even individuals have always been active agents in political debate, but the manner in which they influence international politics has changed in significant ways. While these actors had varying degrees of influence in international politics in earlier periods, their impact came largely through lobbying their national governments. In this mode of political influence, nonstate actors aggregate and articulate domestic interests

to the state, shaping the preferences of a state which in turn determine the state's behavior in international politics.

Although the direct relationship between nonstate actors and the state remains an important link for political participation, nonstate actors now also influence international politics more directly (Haas, 1991; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Betsil and Corell 2008). Through direct lobbying of global governance bodies, nonstate actors shape political debate internationally, in turn impacting the behaviour of states from both above and below. The process which led to the Ottawa Treaty (concerning the ban of landmines) is perhaps the most prominent example of nonstate actors participating in security governance with marked success, and banks have started to lobby the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision directly on issues such as capital reserve requirements when they find national policies contrary to their interest (see Held and Young, 2011). This trend in general is strongest, however, in environmental governance where INGOs have become such important actors that their influence has been called "functionally equivalent to diplomats," since they perform "many of the same functions as state delegates" such as interest aggregation and articulation, negotiation and submitting policy recommendations (Hale and Held 2011: 9; Betsill and Corell 2008). The emergence of nonstate actors certainly creates a more complex governance system than one comprised of traditional principal-agent relationships between states and purely intergovernmental organizations. This can pose potential problems of governance fragmentation, but it also broadens the platform for political deliberation and debate (Risse-Kappen 1995; Anheier et al. 2006; Betsill and Corell 2008).

Third, there has been a shift in how regulation and governance are enforced. The diverse forms of global governance produce equally diverse regulation that is intended to shape the behavior of states. This requires, first and foremost, the participation of states in regulatory structures, but it also requires that states comply with the result of negotiations even if it is against their own self-interest. Traditionally, compliance in international agreements is linked to the possibility of punitive measures (i.e. sanctions) that penalize violators in order to ensure appropriate conduct. Increasingly, however, trends can be detected that ensure that rules are enforced through alternative means such as voluntary based arrangements and initiatives, as well as international standards that are adhered to by actors because of their reputational and coordinative effects (see Kerwer 2005). Norm diffusion and capacity-building can be an even more powerful tool for behavioral change

than punitive measures (Chayes and Chayes 1995). This approach seeks to do more than just punish violators by building the capacity and incentives for actors to comply with established international standards. Institutions such as the UN Global Compact and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement are good examples of the voluntary and informal regulation that is growing in global governance bodies (see Hale and Held 2011). These innovations in compliance schemes are positive steps in developing more effective governance; they indicate a range of productive experiments in new methods of creating rules and systems of enforcement which a diversity of public and private actors can both engage with and uphold. Self-evidently, however, they are not sufficient in and of themselves to solve the problem of compliance and enforcement as a spiral of global bads, from global financial market instability to climate change, continues to form.

Fourth, overlapping with the trends mentioned above, there has been a proliferation of new types of global governance institutions in the postwar era, and especially since the end of the Cold War (Hale and Held 2011). These are not multilateral, state-to-state institutions, but instead combine various actors under varying degrees of institutionalization. In some areas of global governance these kinds of institutions rank among the most important. The case of global finance stands out in this regard (e.g. the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, the Financial Stability Forum; see Held and Young, 2011), but other examples include global health governance (e.g. the Global Fund, the GAVI alliance, and polio eradication efforts; see Hanefield 2011, Harmer and Bruen 2011, Koenig-Archibugi 2011) and standard-setting (Buthe and Mattli 2011).

In aggregate, these new institutions have contributed to the growing polycentricism observed in many areas of global governance. A polycentric approach can have advantages and disadvantages (see Hale, Held and Young, 2013). On the one hand, it can mean that more issues are addressed in meaningful ways – through specialized bodies qualified to regulate and govern a specific issue area. On the other hand, it can exacerbate institutional fragmentation. More importantly, in many areas of global governance it is by no means clear that institutional innovation alone is sufficient to fill the governance gap created by new global challenges such as global economic imbalances and climate change. At best these new institutional forms represent a partial solution (Hale and Held 2012).

The complex architecture of global governance

The proliferation of actors and institutions at the transnational level has disrupted a common, though often implicit assumption of the "traditional" literature on transborder institutions: that such institutions can be grouped into cohesive regimes or "institutions possessing norms, decision rules, and procedures which facilitate a convergence of expectations"(Krasner 1983). While this canonical definition of an international regime is broad enough to encompass a great degree of institutional complexity, in practice scholars have often discussed regimes as if there were reducible to a single or set of international organizations or treaties.

In contrast, Victor and Raustiala argue that the expansion and overlap of international institutions require students of global politics to think in terms of "regime complexes," defined as "an array of partially overlapping and nonhierarchical institutions governing a particular issue area" (Raustiala and Victor 2004). Complexity draws attention to new kinds of problems in international politics (Young 1999; Oberthur and Gehring 2006; Alter and Meunier 2009). It allows actors to "forum shop" between institutions, it makes it more difficult for actors to assess the costs and benefits of different strategies, it encourages institutions that include only like-minded actors instead cross-cutting ones, and it potentially generates unforeseen interactions between different institutions (Alter and Meunier 2009).

Innovative transnational governance institutions contribute to this growing complexity of global governance. Not only are states creating more and more intergovernmental organizations and treaties, but they, and other actors, are creating new kinds of institutions with policymaking authority. This has led many regime complexes today to be truly multifarious amalgamations of institutions and actors. Sometimes these regime complexes, for example, global health, are relatively cohesive around shared goals and understandings. Others, however, include institutions working at cross purposes. The regime governing forestry practices, for example, includes a stalled public intergovernmental process, an innovative, multisectoral private labeling scheme, the Forest Stewardship Council, and numerous other innovative voluntary regulation schemes, some of which aim at conservation, others of which are simply industry public relations initiatives (see Humphreys 2006; Held and Hale, 2012).

        The contemporary global governance system has some features of both complexity
and polycentricity.   It can, accordingly, be usefully characterized as a multilayered,
multisectoral and multiactor system in which institutions and politics matter in important
ways to the determination of global policy outcomes; that is, to who gets what when and
why.

        Global governance is multilayered insofar as the making and implementation of
global policies can involve a process of political cooperation and coordination between
suprastate, national transnational and often substate agencies.   Humanitarian relief
operations, for example, often require the coordinated efforts of global, regional, national
and local agencies.   In this respect, global governance is not so much hierarchical
(command and control from the top) as horizontal: a process which involves coordination
and cooperation between agencies across various levels, from the local to the global
(Rosenau, 2000).   However, the configuration of power and politics differs from sector to
sector and from issue to issue, such that policy outcomes are not readily controlled by the
same groups; interests and influence may vary from issue to issue.   For instance, in the
climate negotiations in Qatar (Dec. 2012) poor nations formed a strong lobbying coalition
to establish the prospect, in principle, of rich nations having to compensate poorer nations
for material losses due to climate change.   In the Doha trade round, coordinated developing
country action by the G77 has essentially blocked progress in the negotiations by insisting
that the trade-distorting effects of industrialized agriculture subsidies be addressed at least
along with issues like services and further tariff reductions. Outcomes can be contingent, in
other words, on bargaining, coalition politics, consensus and compromise, rather than on
deference to hegemonic power, significant though this may be (Keohane, 2001).   The
politics of global governance is, thus, significantly differentiated; the politics of global
trade regulation is quite distinct from the politics of climate or peacekeeping. Rather than
being monolithic or unitary the system is best understood as sectoral or segmented.

        Finally, many of the agencies of and participants in the global governance complex
are no longer simply public bodies.   There is considerable involvement of representatives
from transnational civil society, from Greenpeace to Oxfam and an array of NGOs; of the
corporate sector from Monsanto to BP and trade or industrial associations; and of mixed
public-private organisations such as the International Organization of Security
Commissions (IOSCO).   In addition to being multilayered and multisectoral, global

governance is a multiactor complex in which diverse agencies participate in the formulation and conduct of global public policy. See figure one below.
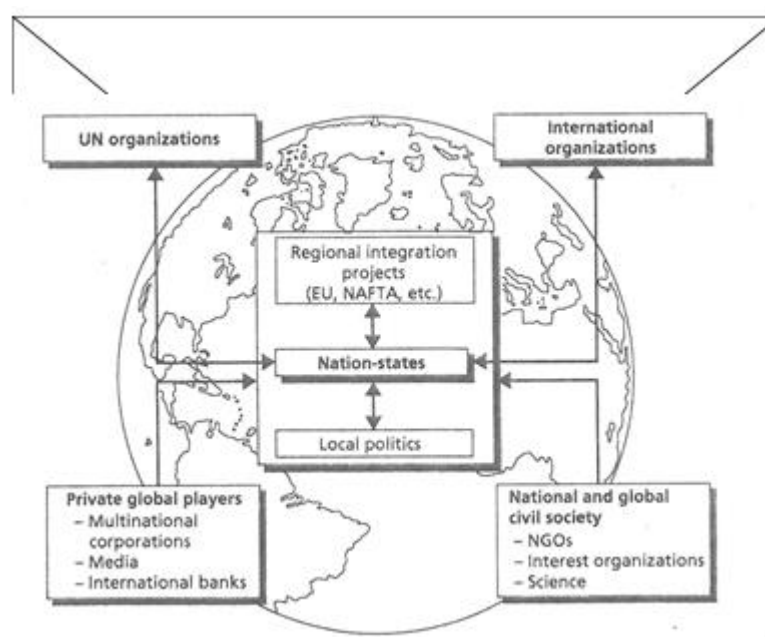

Figure 1. Levels of organization and activity in the architecture of global governance. *Source:* Kennedy, Messner and Nuscheler, 2002.

A polycentric conception of global governance does not imply that all states or agencies have an equal voice or input into, let alone an equal influence over, its agenda or programmes (see Held and McGrew, 2007, ch.7). On the contrary, there is a recognition that the system is institutionally biased or distorted in favour of powerful states and vested interests: it is not by chance that in recent years the promotion of the global market has taken priority over tackling poverty, reducing inequality and achieving the Millennium Development Goals more broadly. Yet the very nature of economic globalization is such that in weaving, however unevenly, thickening webs of worldwide interconnectedness, hierarchical and hegemonic forms of governance become more costly and demanding to pursue and less effective and legitimate (Rosenau 2000); Ikenberry 2001; Keohane 2001; Ferguson and Mansbach 2004). A notion of shared or common global problems ensures that multilateralism can work to moderate (though not to eliminate) power asymmetries (Ikenberry 2001). Even the most powerful recognize that without, at least, the formal participation and tacit agreement of the weak or marginalized, effective and especially legitimate solutions to global problems – whether terrorism or money laundering which directly impinge on their own welfare – would be impracticable. In these new circumstances of 'complex interdependence', in which the returns to hierarchy are

outweighed generally by the benefits of multilateral cooperation, traditional 'hard' power instruments – military force or economic coercion – have a more circumscribed influence. This too creates new political opportunities for private actors and the forces of transnational civil society, which can mobilize considerable 'soft power' resources in the pursuit of diverse objectives (Risse 2000).

Sovereignty and the limits to the diffusion of authority

To further understand the impact of intergovernmentalism and transnational governance on sovereignty and political authority, it is important to reflect more closely on how, and to what extent, the former reshapes the latter. In this regard, it is possible to formulate an hypothesis that illuminates the willingness of states to share and diffuse their authority to other agencies in the global governance complex. It could be put thus: when international and transnational agencies pursue policy agendas that are congruent with state interests, states are more likely to comply with policy outcomes and regulatory standards. When this is not the case, however, and states are confronted with policy outcomes and standards contrary to their interests, principles of sovereignty are typically evoked as a means to trump the agenda of global collaboration and coordination. Moreover, this will more commonly occur among those states able to challenge and ignore international and transnational pressures and forces. Take the areas of security and environment as examples.

Security

At the core of the postwar multilateral security order sits the UN Security Council and various disarmament treaties. These are two domains where problems of great power politics and the forces of growing multipolarity meet with complex ramifications. Both domains fundamentally reflect the postwar balance of power, which is simultaneously a source of their historical effectiveness and an impediment to addressing emergent security challenges. The need to foster great power inclusion in the UN system at the end of World War II led to the arrangement whereby permanent positions on the Security Council – and a veto – were granted to China, France, Russia, UK, and the US (the P-5). This system has remained intact across socio-economic and political transformations in the global order and

now inhibits progress on some of the most pressing security concerns. Thus, it is the interplay between institutional intransigence and emerging multipolarity that illuminates the current short falls and failings of the UN system; namely, that dominant powers continue to bolster their interests and resist emerging powers, resulting in deadlock in key negotiations.

The historical use of the Security Council veto illustrates how the P-5 powers have operated to protect and further their interests over time. The US has consistently exercised its veto on questions pertaining to Israel, and more recently, Russia and China invoked theirs against Security Council resolutions concerning the Syrian state's violent attacks on its civilians, the Sudanese government's brutality in Darfur, and in other similar cases. Attempts at reforming the Security Council veto have failed to date with the result that the threats facing the world, especially with the rise of intrastate conflict (Kaldor 1998), are infrequently and ineffectively addressed by the very institution responsible for maintaining global peace and security. Dominant interests have, in short, continued to trump the reform of security arrangements and multilateral approaches to security challenges.

Similar problems of institutional intransigence and increasing multipolarity are found in the disarmament regimes and concomitant efforts made to contain and reduce the most deadly weapons ever created. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the primary mechanism intended to prevent the spread and use of nuclear weapons; the three principle goals of the NPT are non-proliferation, disarmament, and the management of pacific nuclear capacities. While it can be argued that the NPT and related bilateral agreements (such as SALT and START between Russia and the US) have been successful in helping to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, weaknesses in the regime are apparent when one considers the path that North Korea took to developing nuclear weapons; by developing pacific capacity allowed under article IV, then by withdrawing from the treaty as allowed by article X (see the NPT text). Similar concerns now exist over Iran's nuclear program with widespread speculation over its ambitions to develop weapons grade enrichment. India, Pakistan, and Israel simply never joined the treaty, exempting themselves from its requirements. These examples not withstanding, 'horizontal' proliferation has been largely avoided (e.g in South Africa, South America, and East Asia). The same cannot be said, however, about 'vertical' proliferation and disarmament – evidenced by the vast nuclear stockpiles that were developed by the USSR/Russia and the US in the postwar years. Continued bilateral agreements between these two countries have

been celebrated as successes, yet they have not amounted to actual disarmament by any significant measure. The vested interests of these states, and the structural protections they enjoy in the NPT and UN systems, have allowed them to sustain arsenals capable of global destruction should they ever be operationalized. While the staggered and incremental successes of great power negotiation are important steps, they fall far short of a robust and effective multilateral system capable of eliminating nuclear threats.

Alongside the inertia on "traditional" issues, harder and more complex problems have emerged in the global security arena. First, the nature and form of physical threats facing the world community have transformed over the last several decades, to include contemporary threats such as transnational terrorism, failed states, piracy and cyber-attacks. These problems are all transborder and intermestic (Rosenau 1996), making it harder for any state (even the most powerful) to resolve alone. Effective responses to these threats require significant coordination and compromise, both of which have been on short supply. Secondly, the recognition of new or more complex security problems is driven by a transformed understanding of security itself, whereby the concern and priority placed on individual human security increasingly trumps a preoccupation with state security alone (see Hale, Held and Young, 2013 ch.2).

A primary example of a complex, transborder problem can be seen in the contemporary terrorism threat faced by the world community. Terrorism itself is not a new threat but in many ways it has changed, as have the strategies employed to mitigate it. The type of global terrorism the world faces today has developed alongside the growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the later 20th century. Globalization has given rise to non-state transborder networks of organized violence that seek to benefit from global infrastructures, and in many instances have been able to exploit them by operating in shadow economies. It is a threat that requires effective coordination at the global level engaging multilevel partners including states, regional bodies and financial organizations, to name a few.

While multilateral efforts to deal with terrorism have been multifaceted, they have been limited in effect. Perhaps the greatest success has occurred in the tracking and freezing of terrorists' finances though bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (see Taylor 2007; Tsingou 2010; Joint Forum 2003, 2005). Having said this, the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy has two different bureaucracies: a Counter-Terrorism Committee, which exists

within the Security Council, and the 'Ad Hoc 6th Committee', which operates within the General Assembly to focus on legal issues. Although the UN has been able to agree to some specific conventions aimed at particular aspects of terrorism, it still cannot agree on a basic definition of terrorism itself. This lack of basic agreement highlights just how challenging it has been for the multilateral order to form and implement coordinated global responses to terrorist threats.

In the absence of a robust global anti-terror regime, dominant states – primarily the US – have filled the void with national strategies and policies. In this arena, President Obama has drastically accelerated the use of weaponized unmanned aerial vehicles (i.e. drones) as a favored tool in US anti-terror strategy. With active drone operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, Obama has instituted a policy that is increasingly calling into question the efficacy of international law and emerging security principles. US drone strikes have recently drawn sharp criticism from both the international community (see Bowcott, 2012; Carter, 2012), as well as from national leaders – for example, from Pakistan (see Nauman, 2012; Masood, 2012). Yet, despite this criticism the US shows no sign of changing its course. Given the power of the US in the international system, Obama's unilateral abrogation of international law undermines the potential for and effectiveness of a rule based multilateral system. This trend risks deepening the institutional stagnation currently found in global security governance because it subverts effective transborder cooperation on pressing security issues.

Environment

Although the environment was not a significant policy concern when the postwar institutions were established in the 1940s, it has emerged as one of the most developed areas of global politics. Today there are over 200 multilateral environmental agreements and scores of specialized international organizations covering issues ranging from transboundary air pollution, to desertification, to biodiversity, to the ozone layer (see Held et al. 1999, ch.8). There are also several intergovernmental bodies that act as focal points for the broader environmental regime, namely the United Nations Environment Programme (an international organization), the Commission on Sustainable Development (a UN-based intergovernmental forum), and the Global Environment Facility (a specialized fund for environmental projects).

Despite this plethora of institutions, global environmental governance remains fragmented, disjoint and, ultimately, weak. Successful environmental regimes—such as the one limiting ozone-depleting substances—are rare.   In turn, failures—deforestation, biodiversity, fisheries and climate change—are all too common. In response, a wide array of new forms of global governance has emerged, and private firms and civil society groups have played a leading, even dominant role in creating and sustaining these initiatives. Yet despite this intense activity, stalemate too often pervades environmental politics. Climate change politics is indicative.

Climate provides perhaps the starkest example of how new levels of interdependence and the interplay between leading and emerging powers can overwhelm the capacity of existing institutions to resolve global collective action problems. Climate change is a quintessentially global issue, as greenhouse gas emissions anywhere have impacts everywhere. Furthermore, the impacts are large. The 2006 Stern Report estimated, among other things, that climate change could reduce global GDP by up to 20 percent compared to what it otherwise would be. We are thus all deeply affected by the carbon usage of all other inhabitants of the planet - a remarkable degree of interconnectedness and interdependence.

Equally troubling, the costs of mitigating climate change, though much smaller than the costs of allowing it to occur, are substantial, and have decisive distributional impacts for countries, industries, firms, and individuals. Rich countries have created the majority of carbon in the atmosphere, and continue to have significantly higher per capita emissions rates than emerging economies, especially in North America, Australia, and the Gulf. However, the majority of future emissions will come from the developing world, meaning that the participation of countries like China, India and Brazil is required for any effort to mitigate climate change to succeed. In sum, climate change has created perhaps unprecedented levels of interdependence even as the power to stop it diffuses to a range of different actors.

Cooperation, then, is necessary, but in short supply. Since the 1992 Rio Summit, almost every country in the world has met annually to discuss how to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The objective has been to create a global treaty specifying binding emissions reductions, along the lines of the successful ozone regime. Two decades of negotiations have yielded exactly one treaty requiring reductions in greenhouses gasses, the 1995 Kyoto Protocol that committed rich nations to a tiny five percent average

reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2012. Even this weak target proved unacceptable to the United States, which refused to implement the treaty. Indeed, it proved even too ambitious for many signatories, like Canada, which are on track to violate their commitments (and will face no penalty for doing so). Developing countries, which will produce the lion's share of future emissions, accepted no commitments at all under Kyoto. The Protocol was meant, of course, as a building block toward future commitments. A similar incremental approach had, after all, succeeded within the ozone regime. As the fateful 2009 Copenhagen summit demonstrated, however, no global deal will follow any time soon.

Instead, the world has turned to a more piecemeal approach (Falkner, Stephan et al. 2010; Keohane and Victor 2010; Hale 2011). Keohane and Victor (2010) describe a "regime complex" for climate change that includes the UNFCCC but also an array of other intergovernmental bodies like the G-20 and the international financial institutions. Unable to reach an agreement on a global treaty in the UN process, states will increasingly turn to other, more fragmented fora, they argue.

Domestic policy plays a large role. Individual governmental commitments to reduce emissions, like those implemented by the European Union or various US states, seek to make a major contribution to resolving the problem. Some of these measures are quite significant. In the United States, for example, one study has estimated that the commitments of 17 states and 684 cities (representing 53 percent of the US population and 43 percent of its emissions) could stabilize the nation's emissions at 2010 levels by 2020 (Lutsey and Sperling 2008). Other types of policies such as China's ambitious energy intensity targets also have important effects. Yet, unlike many areas of environmental politics (forestry, fishing and biodiversity), climate change is an "all or nothing" collective action problem. Here it is the case that the altruistic initiatives of some actors will matter little unless all the major emitters control their greenhouse gases. The fragmented, domestic, and transnational climate initiatives thus face the enormous challenge of reaching a scale where they can have a meaningful impact (Au, Conrad et al. 2011). As the 2012 meeting in Qatar highlighted, we are a long way from this position. Runaway climate change remains the prospect unless the US, China and India, among other major emitters, become genuine partners in a new climate regime.

Conclusion

The proliferation of intergovernmentalism and transnational governance mechanisms in the postwar period is a striking trend. While the complex global governance system has characteristics of a multilayered, multisectoral and multiactor system, the question remains how far political authority has been diffused, in practice, throughout the global order. The global political agenda is increasingly shaped by a diversity of voices and agents, but sovereignty remains a powerful obstacle to the development and execution of policy in areas sensitive to the interests of leading states. Breakthroughs in postwar nuclear disarmament, along with new binding commitments from the major emitters of GHGs, still seems some distance from the world envisaged by many of the architects of the postwar multilateral order and of the complex transnational institutions that now struggle to govern it.

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