

Political Power, Accountability, and Global Governance

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I. The “Architecture” of Global Governance

Global governance has been discussed so far mostly in technical political and administrative terms. Discussion may have produced political innovations and proposals for change, but the paradigm has been deeply embedded in the traditional intergovernmental framework. Governments negotiate a treaty, ratified by the national parliaments, which provides a basis for cooperation and problem-solving among sovereign states. The key concerns in this process are the effectiveness of the regimes established for governance and the compliance of the member states with its provisions. This narrow focus has been particularly pronounced in the institutionalization of the governance of the global financial system.

Indeed, the technocratic approach to global governance is reflected in frequent references to financial architecture, and institutional architecture in general, that needs, in turn, its own infrastructure. Another common bias is to see global governance as a form of global organization in which governments “sacrifice their authority to a higher supranational authority”. However, these supranational structures should be so simple in nature that they “respect the nation-state as the crucial player” (Sandler 1997: 142-50). In this approach, global governance is viewed primarily in terms of a trade-off between national sovereignty and supranational authority which is obviously way too simple.

One implication of the technocratic approach concerns the nature of enforcement of international norms which is supposed to be a neutral process. The failure of the enforcement of the Growth and Stability Pact (GSP) in the European Union provides telling evidence on how unrealistic such an apolitical view of enforcement can be. The question is not only about the special privileges taken by bigger powers, but also about the unequal capabilities of states to monitor and implement agreements.

It has been, therefore, recommended that flexibility and facilitation rather than coercion should be used as instruments of enforcement. In other words, dispute settlement, capacity building, and persuasion should replace the use of economic and other punishments as means of global governance. The facilitation of compliance with governance rules has been thought, however, to be mainly the task of governments (Chayes and Chayes 1995).

The dominance of “governmentality” in the debates and research on global governance has naturally elicited criticism. One of the key critical points has concerned the tendency to treat governance as an instrument of control that should assure stability and order in the system. With some justification, it has been suggested that governance has become a tool in the politics of closure that aims to prevent the rise of alternative forms of thinking and organization. Therefore, the “governist commitment” should not be accepted as a neutral, technical approach, but its political underpinnings should be revealed and reflected upon (Latham 1999; Palan 1999).

The critical tone on globalization reflects the effort to open up the international political space from below. This is not to say that global governance is moving to the domain of transnational civil society; only that its various actors have inserted themselves more effectively in global political processes. “Statism as a mode of regulation” has declined at the expense of the private sector and civil society organizations (which in turn has a complex mutual relationship). Civil society offers a democratic promise from below, but it is unable to fulfil this promise to any effective degree. Democratic global governance must be built of diverse and even contradictory elements (Scholte 2002).

In other words, the idea has dawned that governments cannot be the sole agencies of governance because of their incomplete transnational capabilities and outright partiality in some areas. The role of the state has to be complemented by other actors, such as the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For instance, the Commission on Global Governance recognized their importance, but also pointed out their dual nature. The Commission also noted that the “growing range of actors involved makes the challenge of governance more complex”. The ensuing “institutional diversity may complicate the process, [but] it could also greatly increase the capacity of the governance system” (The Commission on Global Governance 1995: 32-35).

The power of the global market place has grown immensely in the postwar period. This does not mean that we are living in a neoliberal world order; to the contrary, neoliberal forces have suffered several set-

backs since the mid-1990s. True, market actors have developed their own regulatory regimes outside the governmental and civil society spheres to reduce uncertainty and avoid market failures. However, in most cases business actors and their collective representatives are cooperating, and conflicting, with public agencies, and to some extent with civil society actors, to create and run a regulatory framework. It is hard to describe how extensive the business regulatory framework has become and how intermeshed its national, regional, and global elements are (for a major effort, see Braithwaite and Drahos 2000).

The recognition of the relevance of civil society and business organizations for global governance is, however, only one step forward, and perhaps not even the most important one. In fact, the landscape of the politics and research on global governance is now so diverse that we need new concepts and theorizing to be able to make sense of the major changes. Moreover, this diversity cannot be disentangled from justice claims and other normative issues in global governance. Only by confronting the political, analytical, and normative problems head on, we have hope of progress in the effort to develop more representative and inclusive forms of global governance.

It should be obvious from the points made above that global governance is not a singular form that can be dictated from some center of power. The complexity of global governance requires the development of typologies to describe its various elements. A simple typology distinguishes between public and private actors on the one hand and political and economic regulatory tools on the other. This exercise yields four different institutional arenas of global regulation; i. e. interstate, transnational, activist, and market regimes (Lipschutz and Fogel 2002: 125-29).

James N. Rosenau has designed a somewhat more complex typology based on three types of structures (formal, informal, and mixed) and two types of processes (unidirectional and multidirectional). The typology is further complicated by the distinction made by Rosenau between eight different kinds of collectivities involved in governance processes. Unidirectional processes of governance provide a hierarchical picture of reality; they are either top-down, bottom-up, or driven by the market. They are complemented by multidirectional and non-linear processes that Rosenau calls network, side-by-side, and Mobius-web governance (Rosenau 2002: 80-84; see also Rosenau 2003: 396-99).

These possibilities do not exhaust at all the alternative forms and processes of global governance. They provide, however, the idea that any singular and permanent description of the global governance system is

misleading and does not reflect the complexity and diversity of reality. As a result, we have to be open to the volatility of the world; there are multiple forms of global governance that both reinforce and contradict each other. Therefore, global governance is in flux and there is no way of telling where it is heading. The only thing we know is that globalization and its governance has no permanent end state.

II. Accountability and Responsibility

In the standard theory of intergovernmental cooperation, the issue of accountability has been considered to be quite simple, at least in democratic countries; governments were responsible to the people and negotiated with other governments on the basis of the mandate they had received from the voters. Should the outcome deviate significantly from the preferences of the majority of voters, they could kick the government out of power in the next elections. Of course, such a simple theory of representation has never worked as perfectly as this ideal type of democratic accountability suggests. The reality has always been more complex and today it is obviously even more so.

In standard parlance, accountability means responsibility for someone or something and, in the case of demand, obligation to justify one's action with reference to law or social norms. The growing internal demand for accountability, and sanctions to enforce it, usually involves an impetus towards more democracy and greater responsibility. The principle of accountability becomes meaningful only if there is an adequate control of the decision makers by the constituencies that create the foundations of a polity. Representation and accountability are supposed to lead to legitimacy which form together the foundations of a democratic society.

In a simple model of accountability, the agents (the executive) are responsible to the principals (people) for their decisions and actions. The agent-principal relationship can be vexed even in national societies where the responsibility of the government to the constituencies can be clouded by imperfect information, apathy of the voters, and the diversionary moves by the executive. Thus, the voters may lack incentives to demand accountability, the process may be hampered by various transaction costs, and the executive may actively try to avoid such responsibility.

Robert O. Keohane (2003: 140-42) makes a distinction between internal and external accountability.¹ Internal accountability applies when the

1 James N. Rosenau (2003: 282) proposes a related distinction between the internal and external realms of authority and argues that these two types of authorities tend to reinforce each other.

principal and the agent live in the same polity or community. They usually provide means by which the potential accountability gap can be closed. The situation is much more complex in the area of external accountability where the agent is outside the borders of the principal, the people who are significantly affected, usually in an adverse way, from afar without having recourse to means to close the accountability gap.

This calls for the establishment of a more encompassing political and normative framework by which the external sources of local problems can be internalized. This is called global governance for short. As will be discussed below, the task to close the external accountability gap can be entrusted to different types of actors, or their coalitions. Yet, today, the state remains the most credible candidate for the task of global governance despite the fact that it has several weaknesses undermining the success of its efforts (Koenig-Archibugi 2002: 46-49).

As a result, the role of the state in global governance is a contested issue. Some authors stress the ongoing transformation of the state; it is declining, shrinking, and its power is, in any case, devolving to the regional and local levels (Kettl 2000). On the other hand, the continuing relevance of the state, in the regulation of the global finance and other areas of business, is considered both a necessary and desirable aspect of global governance (Pauly 2002).

The role of the United States, as “the indispensable nation”, is pointed out by many opinion makers; without its active involvement in multi-lateral cooperation, global governance is not possible (Summers 1999). This stance harks, of course, back to the idea that global governance is a political project driven by the major capitalist powers both for their own and collective benefit.

The nature of the agent-principal relationship becomes even more complex when we move beyond the nation-state framework and consider its supranational and transnational aspects. The European Union provides an example on how its polity can hardly be couched in terms of a simple relationship between national principals and community agents. In addition to the variety of methods available to the principals to instruct and control the agents, there are also multiple levels of governance, divisions of labor, and transnational constituencies that confuse any democratic theorist.

These features result in several overlapping, and often competing, models of governance that can be perhaps captured only by a modular approach (Scharpf 2001). In the EU context, this means that any simple model of accountability probably fails to capture its complexity and to provide

clear guidelines for the institution of accountability (Pollack 1997). An additional problem is that in the EU the limits of the internal and external accountability are blurred; the growing power of the Community institutions creates a kind of semi-external dimension of accountability.

The old statist model of accountability is also challenged by new vertical arrangements. The responsibility of the individuals for their violation of the international humanitarian law and the laws of war in front of the international community has been institutionalized in the International Criminal Court (ICC). As a result, individuals, in addition to the governments, have explicitly become subjects of international law. A proposal that international organizations should be made accountable for their actions to another international body adds a horizontal dimension to global accountability. The main motive for such a proposal is to make sure that governments cannot avoid their responsibilities by subcontracting the legal obligations to an international organization (Reinisch 2001).

To be valid and meaningful, the model of accountability has to be expanded in several directions. In particular one has to take into consideration several structural and policy changes that have opened up new spaces for governance and enhanced the demands for greater accountability. These demands are not only normative, but also practical in nature: statist, "territorialist governance has become impractical". Instead, "contemporary governance is multilayered" and has to include new public and private actors (Scholte 2002: 287-89). This observation is not particularly revolutionary; even scholars stressing the primacy of states in international relations, recognize that NGOs and transnational businesses are relevant actors and may even compete with the intergovernmental coordination (Keohane and Nye 2000: 22-24).

III. System Transformation

In exploring new avenues for more accountable governance, one has to consider the *multiplication and diversification of actors* due to the globalization process. It is commonplace to point out that the emergence of multiple levels of governance has brought in global politics new types of actors. They include, at a minimum, private subnational actors, public national actors, private transnational actors, public intergovernmental actors, and public supranational actors.² All these categories of actors have

² "Public" is used here to refer to state and governmental entities, while "private" actors are non-state of nature. The latter can be profit-oriented business actors or

their own specific features and functions in the emerging transnational or international polity. This is why the emerging international system cannot be but complex in nature.

The emerging model of global governance and accountability requires also the recognition of the *transformation of issues* on the international agenda. In the territorial, state-centric system, the agenda has been loaded by various national concerns and political, economic, and military relations between the states. The traditional agenda has been constrained both in terms of its substantive diversity and the involvement of non-state actors in its shaping.

It is commonplace, but still true, to point out that the international agenda has increasingly been expanded to issues pertaining to environment, technology, human rights, gender, organized crime, and numerous other social and legal problems. The growing divergence of actors, interests, and political spaces mean that there is no way to return to the traditional, restricted agenda. This trend is evidenced well by the rising importance, and even a central role, of the NGOs in promoting social development and public health in the world in contrast to the free operation of the economic market (Deacon et al. 2003).

On the other hand, globalization itself has contributed to the transformation of issues. Thus, the growth of international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) has shaped the economic agendas concerning labor standards, food safety, rules of origin, competition law, and many other issues. The revolution in information technology is another aspect of globalization that has generated new issues for national and international consideration. These issues include privacy, intellectual property rights, and the monitoring of information flows for their content. It has been suggested, with justification, that the information revolution is leading to shifts in political authority as well. This shift obviously favors the market actors and open societies at the expense of the closed ones (Florini 2000; Kalathil and Boas 2003).

The issue transformation seems to be pointing in two different directions. On the one hand, social, cultural, and humanitarian issues have grown in importance in comparison to political, economic, and military questions. The “socialization” of international relations has been associated, in turn, with the transnational coming of the individuals and groups. It has been

non-governmental social actors. The latter distinction means that the postulation of an undifferentiated civil society, either national or transnational, is not very meaningful.

estimated that in 2000 the share of value-based international NGOs had grown to 23 per cent of all INGOs, although the organizations focusing on economic development, science, and technology, accounting for 47 per cent, dominated the field (Kaldor, Anheier and Glasius 2003: 14-16).

On the other hand, international relations have become “privatized” in the sense that the role of international commercial actors has both expanded and deepened. These non-state actors are increasingly integrated in the operations of the liberal world market which has affected even the NGO sector where the corporate model of organization has grown in popularity. However, the privatization tendency does not mean a complete turn to the market; in fact, this trend has been aided by the state and would not probably have been possible without its support. The spread of the corporate model and its integration with state interests is perhaps one of the reasons why the present forms of global governance receive critical scrutiny and outright opposition (Ronit and Schneider 2000; Hummel 2001; Hall and Biersteker 2002).

In other words, transnationalization is a complex phenomenon that cannot be squeezed into any single category of action. At a minimum, one should make a distinction between international privatization through business actors on the one hand and civil society actors on the other. Business privatization by multinational corporations creates transnational spaces in which firms can operate across borders without facing major political or legal hurdles. The accountability of corporations to national and international publics is limited as long as businesses do not produce any major public harm and provide jobs and taxes for the local communities. Thus, the nature of outcomes rather than compliance with particular norms becomes the key criterion of judgement.

On the other hand, the business privatization also includes the transnational operations of organized crime which have been also expanding in recent years. To some extent, the globalization of crime has followed in the wake of the transnational expansion of licit business operations with the exception that crime gangs want to have even less contact with the public authorities.

The expansion of private transnational business spaces has had also a bearing on the nature of global governance. Thus, globalization itself has generated among the business actors demands for the self-regulation of their activities. Traditionally, business actors have tried to fashion their environment by lobbying governments and other public agencies that have power to decide about regulatory rules. Business lobbying usually aims at the deregulation of technical and legal rules; it is a form

of advocacy. This is the case in many areas, such as public health and environment, that touch upon the safety of individual citizens. In these areas the government is supposed to have a special responsibility to protect individual rights, while business is in favor of deregulation.

On the other hand, corporations have shifted their attention to self-regulation both to keep governments and consumer groups out of their own activities and use their own expertise to draft, for instance, new global standards for accounting. In other words, self-regulation is self-interested behaviour by corporations; it is an effort to capture a part of global governance under their own control and shrink in that way the public space (Ronit and Schneider 2000: 23; Braithwaite and Drahos 2000: 488-92).

There are many sectors in the world economy in which private governance is widespread and growing. Yet, the limits of governance are still decided largely by the governments or intergovernmental organizations; even deregulation has its limits. The areas where private governance is expanding, or is even the only game in town, include risk analysis and bond-rating agencies, online commerce, computer standards, business ethics, and maritime transportation. On the other hand, it is inconceivable that the regulation of many central policy areas - such as investment rules and intellectual property rights - would be left to the private market actors to decide (for relevant case studies, see Cutler, Haufler and Porter 1999; Higgot, Underhill and Bieler 2000).

In the transnational civil society one can also make a distinction between functional operations which simply aim to keep transactions flowing by cross-border coordination. On the other hand, transnational actors are increasingly involved in lobbying and advocacy by claiming expertise or moral authority on a particular area of issues, such as human rights. It seems that the success rate of advocacy campaigns has been growing in recent years, although individual successes are often considered too a modest aim. The sights should be set at a much more ambitious goal; the promotion of transnational democracy (McGrew 2002; Price 2003)

IV. Governments and “non-governments”

The standard view of global governance considers it primarily a form of intergovernmental cooperation by which economic, social, ecological, and other transactions are regulated. The regulatory approach stresses the problems of international collective action and the underprovisioning of public goods that tend to characterize decentralized systems. In other

words, the failure of collective efforts by governments at governance is seen to lead to instability, defection, conflict, and other suboptimal results. To alleviate these problems, the “regulatory deficit” must be filled by appropriate prohibitions and requirements addressed to relevant actors (Cable 1999: 72; Young 1999: 26-28). The regulatory view appears also in a definition of governance as the “processes and institutions, formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group” (Keohane and Nye 2000: 12).

Obviously, the intergovernmental perspective deals with a central aspect of global governance, but it neglects several important issues. Regulation is only one of the functional tasks needed in global governance. The commitment to regulation means that those which are higher up in the global hierarchy and have power over other actors are supposed to have the right to regulate the actions by the others. In focusing solely on regulation, global governance is facing the risk of falling in the trap of formalism and legalism in which it is ostensibly devoid of political motives and interests. In reality, global governance is a contested, uneven, asymmetric, and incoherent process (Wilkinson 2002: 2-3).

The concept of the regulatory state has been coined to indicate an aspect of public action that is at odds with the liberalization of international economic relations. In this approach, the opposition between the public regulation and the private market is considered to define a main conflict in contemporary capitalism. As a trade barrier, the regulatory rule can be either proscriptive (e.g. the ban on trade discrimination) or prescriptive (e. g. the standardization of products). Moreover, both proscriptive and prescriptive regulation can serve either specific (e. g. economic rent-seeking) or collective (e. g. the protection of biodiversity) interests (Trebilcock and Howse 1999: 500-10).

Regulatory regimes are, however, but one form of global governance. In addition, one can speak at least of procedural, programmatic, and generative regimes. Procedural regimes focus on the interpretation and administration of rules, while programmatic regimes stipulate the source and use of resources to attain particular ends. Finally, generative regimes are usually built around a “guiding vision” and develop “distinctive social practices where none previously existed”. For this reason, they mobilize constituencies to promote a particular political program (Young 1999: 28-31). Thus, the concept of regulatory regime has to be complemented especially by that of the programmatic regime which embeds the demands about changes in the existing institutions and political practices.

Another key feature in the emerging system of global governance concerns the multiplicity and diversity of actors. States are but one category of actors that co-exists with private civil society movements, business organizations, and transnational cultural communities. The growing diversity of actors is due to the relative decline and transformation of the state as the dominant international actor and the resulting expansion of non-territorial, transnational spaces that states are unable to control. Against this backdrop, globalization can be defined as the rise of autonomous transnational spaces and the general decline in transaction costs due to the reduction of institutional and communication barriers (Väyrynen 2001).³

The relative decline and transformation of the state is associated with its growing embeddedness in political and economic networks. The state becomes less of a corporate actor and more a decisional arena in which various forces meet to resolve national and international problems. Sovereignty seems to remain the organizing principle of international relations, but politics and decision-making become more diverse and complex than before. Networks, coalitions, and transactions become additional units of analysis along with the conventional territorial actors (Ansell and Weber 1999; Kobrin 2002).

Globalization leads to stronger linkages between both the multiple and diverse actors and different levels ranging from the local through the national and the regional to the global one. In fact, the dynamics of inter-institutional linkages is a key feature in contemporary schemes of global governance (Young 1999: 172-80). The interaction of actors and issues creates *spheres of action* that are manifested, in turn, on different levels of social organization. These spheres tap different aspects of globalization - such as trade, investment, finance, and technology - as well as its social, political, and cultural dimensions. These dimensions are interlinked and enmeshed with each other which creates "network interconnections" between, say, economy and environment, and military and humanitarian concerns (Keohane and Nye 2000: 10-11).

It follows from these observations that there cannot be any single model of global governance; to the contrary, it is fractured into multi-

3 This definition is inspired, in part, by Scholte (2000: 46-50) who stresses the importance of "supraterritorial relations". In such relations, actors have largely transcended the territorial space. However, I have opted for the concept of transnational rather than supraterritorial space for the reason that transnationalism conveys better the idea that even transnational spaces are anchored in local societies, though not necessarily states. As a result, one could speak of translocal relations instead of globalization (Smith 2001: 3-5, 169-71).

ple spheres, both private and public, and levels of action. The fractured nature of global governance does not mean that it is anarchic as it has nodes of power and resources where economic and political forces meet. The multiplicity and diversity of global governance efforts also mean that regulation cannot be its sole function, although powerful states and firms aim to strengthen it.

The need of coordination also increases almost exponentially with the growing complexity and fragmentation of global governance. Moreover, globalization, and efforts at its governance, create necessarily counter forces and counter ideas making it a contested process that has no single outcome. These counter movements may be crystallized into programmatic regimes that provide an alternative to the dominant orthodoxies. In other words, globalization and global governance as mainstream processes lead to demands for “humane governance”, “globalization from below”, and the “democratic reinvention of globalization” (Falk 1995; Grzybowski 2002). This means that the concepts of globalization and global governance have to be stretched, perhaps beyond reasonable limits, to ensure their validity in the analysis of ever-changing reality.

V. Hybrid Governance

The tendencies described above have converged into the rise of new hybrid forms of governance. The concept of hybridity is not novel in the political context. Thus, the regimes combining democratic and authoritarian features have been called hybrid political regimes (Diamond 2002). In general, any mix of different elements across the systems or levels, forming a new combination can be called a hybrid.

Hybridity has been used also to describe a new type of multilateralism, i. e. complex interdependence, that brings together intergovernmental and non-governmental actors to conflict-ridden patterns of cooperation. The result is a new type of relationship in which intergovernmental institutions and global social movements, such as the World Bank and the environmental organizations, though ideologically divided, have decided to define cooperation as mutually rewarding. The emerging “complex multilateralism is an institutional adaptation to the process of globalization”.

Such a cooperation between governmental and non-governmental entities has several motives. The IGOs may aim to appease their opponents and collect new information to help their own operations. Social movements may want, in turn, to expand their international representation, broaden the policy agenda, and modify by their inroads the existing institutions.

Practical experiences indicate that such hybrid forms of cooperation have produced only limited results, although they have had differential impact on the positions of individual states. Thus, social movements can make a difference, albeit a limited one (O'Brien et al. 2000: 5-6, 206-11; see also Detomasi 2002: 422-24).⁴

The institutional form of hybrid governance refers to arrangements in which at least two different types of actors cooperate to regulate, administer, or generate social, political and economic activities (Väyrynen 2002: 120-22). A recent example of private governance is the establishment of a common set of global accounting standards by a body of technical experts and policy experts. This development has been made possible by the homogenization of business cultures, especially in the transatlantic context (Jesswein 2001). The investors have started to demand more transparent, reliable, and comparable information for their decision-making; a demand that has been amplified by recent accounting scandals in some major international corporations.

The concept of hybrid global governance has so far been badly under-theorized and it clearly needs further conceptual elaboration due to the multiplicity of its usages. I am inclined to consider hybridity a special form of multilateralism. The concept of complex multilateralism, used by O'Brien and others (2000), covers some aspects of hybrid governance, but neglects some others as it refers primarily to the relationship between non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. A more comprehensive definition of hybridity would say that this form of global governance includes actors that hail from different levels and spheres of action in international relations. The International Union of the Conservation of Nature is a hybrid organization par excellence; it brings together over 700 NGOs, over 100 government agencies, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from almost all countries on the face of the earth.

4 Scholte (2000: 180-81) uses hybridization in a different sense. For him, it refers to the individual level and the search by the people of their own place in the global landscape of identities. As the term suggests, our identities are increasingly complex and malleable, i. e. hybrid. On the other hand, Graz locates "hybrid forms of global power and authority beyond states and markets" and suggests that the study of these forms should focus on the "constitutive elements underpinning their power" (Graz 2001: 740, 747). Yet another way of defining the hybrids can be derived from the literature dealing with the networked economic organizations. In that usage, hybrids are synonymous with networks that are considered either separate types of organizations or located on the continuum between markets and hierarchies (Kobrin 2002: 53-54).

Another way to look at hybrid governance is to recognize that various forms of governance increasingly cross across various levels; national, regional, and global. With increasing variety of its uses, the meaning of the concept of governance changes; it refers increasingly to “the fragmentation of political authority among governmental and nongovernmental actors at the national, regional, and global levels”. The process of fragmentation increases, in turn, the need of various actors to “coordinate their interdependent needs and interests ... in the absence of a unifying political authority” (Krahmann 2003: 330-32). Understood in this way, the entire field of governance is filled increasingly by different kinds of hybrid forms.

Philip Cerny uses the concept of plurilateralism in a manner that comes pretty close to my idea of hybrid governance. Cerny suggests that the end of the cold war has ushered in a process of structural differentiation in the course of which different levels of the system are separated from each other and, at the same time, various functional dimensions become more distinct. In plurilateralism, the international system structure is complex and volatile because it is not stabilized by any hierarchical or polar arrangement of power. Therefore, the system has indeterminate and unpredictable features. In the plurilateral mode, various crosscutting links and actions occur across both levels and functional structures. As each actor has a combination of characteristics and overlapping memberships, the system is pluralistic in nature (Cerny 1993).

VI. Accountability in Global Affairs

The system change in international relations means, among other things, that the traditional patterns of vertical and linear, or internal and external accountability are not effective any more. The disjuncture between the increasingly global economy and the principle of national self-determination results in global governance in a democratic and legitimacy deficit. National legislatures do seldom have enough power and determination to exercise effective control over the actions of inter-governmental organizations.

Therefore, any national control of these organizations falls in the hands of a *classe politique*, i. e. the leading political and bureaucratic members of the executive. These members tend either to share the mindset of the transnational elite running the international organizations or be at such a distance from them that they do not have effective means of influence. In such a situation, the democratic control of global governance faces

almost insurmountable structural and institutional problems (Scholte 2002: 290-92; see also Scholte 2000: 261-82).

Radical solutions to the dilemma of democratic deficit in global governance suggest the establishment of various kinds of transnational legislatures. Such assemblies provide hardly a real remedy, however. This is admitted even by most opponents of the present corporate-driven system of global governance. As a result, their reform proposals are usually less ambitious. They focus either on the reforms of specific institutions, such as the IMF and the WTO, or call for the establishment of new international mechanisms to control the global market place. The proposals on new international mechanisms include the global currency tax, debt arbitration mechanism, and global truth commissions (for an overview of such reform proposals, see Patomäki and Teivainen 2002).

Any reform proposal to enhance the democratic space in global governance has to tackle the issue of authority. Democratic institutions are neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the existence of democratic practice. This is even less the case in the international system where few democratic institutions are in existence. According to Rosenau, different authority relationships can be located on a compliance-defiance continuum in which compliance can, at one end, be due to habits and, at the other end, to influence and power. A legitimacy crisis arises when the traditional structures of authority are unable to elicit compliance and the legitimacy shifts to new sources of authority which lie beyond the state hierarchies (Rosenau 2003: 274-82).

In the realm of globalization and global governance such a shift in legitimacy has clearly taken place. Governments and their mutual organizations do not enjoy habitual compliance with their policies, but they are questioned by a large number of anti-globalization critics. They want to establish new sources of authority and legitimacy, first of all through the national and transnational civil society. Its normative content can be derived from three accounts; democratic intergovernmentalism, transnational republicanism, and cosmopolitan democracy (McGrew 2003: 157-62). To this mode of analysis a caveat has been added that the problem is not primarily the lack of accountability of intergovernmental organizations, but that their policies are unjust and unacceptable: "accountability is a distributional issue" (Keohane 2003: 143-46).

Thus, a typical approach to alleviate the democratic deficit is to demand more influence to the national and especially transnational civil society. The civil society represents, after all, the *demos* from which also the formal political institutions derive their legitimacy. The civil society actors

can engage in public education activities and public debates, promote transparency and accountability of governance activities by monitoring them, and foster democratic spin-offs to the territorial political rule. In sum, “civil society offers considerable opportunities to democratize the governance of global relations” (Scholte 2002: 293-95; see also Scholte 2000: 151-56).

The transnational mobilization of the civil society, through the World Social Forum (WSF) and other similar movements, should further help to close the democratic deficit in global governance (Patomäki and Teivainen 2002: 113-29; Teivainen 2002). For this purpose, the WSF does have only limited means, however; it is a forum but not an agent of change. It may generate ideas and mobilize resources of the participants, but it can hardly be an instrument to increase significantly the accountability of intergovernmental organizations.

We know that the civil society is not a simple concept. Usually it refers to the “good” aspects of the society, leaving outside various criminal non-state organizations and even business enterprises. Corporations do not represent the people but seek only profits and, therefore, private corporate governance is not as legitimate as the governance efforts by the civil society actors. This argument is contested, however; following the Hegelian maxim, Paul Wapner notes that “the definition of global civil society...does not recognize the distinction between commercial and non-commercial NGOs”. The market mechanism has expanded so forcefully to the international level that the separation of economic and non-economic forces is not justified (Wapner 1997: 72-77).

This notion leads critical authors to caution against “adaptive globalism” that aims to strengthen the regulation of global economic activities by setting up new norms and institutions. The problem is that “adaptive globalism is increasingly appropriate by global elites”. A more effective means to assert legitimacy and fight corporate governance is to encourage local cultural and environmental movements as “primary agents of resistance”, primarily in the South (Goodman 2002). This new version of “third-worldism” helps to avoid the moral pitfalls associated with the reforms of international institutions.

Thus, the mobilization of the national and transnational civil societies provides only a partial answer to the problem of authority and legitimacy in global governance. The civil society organizations represent only certain stakeholders and not the *demos* as a whole as there is no universal suffrage in the election of their representatives. As a result, civil society organizations themselves are not necessarily transparent in

and accountable even for their own activities. In addition, some NGOs work closely with national governments and do not necessarily have an independent voice in public debates.

VII. Towards a Global Citizenship

All this is not to say that the civil society and its actors are unimportant, and even less bad, in augmenting accountability in global governance. To the contrary, the emergence of new transnational spaces has also expanded the international democratic space where the role of civil society organizations and movements is vital. The issue is rather that in the design of new mechanisms and institutions of global governance one must start from a broader perspective than the spread of the political cult of civil society or better accountability of states.

Global governance efforts should pay much more serious attention to the position of the “uncivil” and “unfree” elements of the global society, including 27 millions slaves and untold millions living in forced prostitution. The efforts to improve global governance should not be so much on the institutional architecture as social goals. One should clearly specify those aims – for instance, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which global governance structures are expected to promote.

In this context, the issue of *demos* is crucial. As its national variant is inadequate in global conditions and no transnational or global variant exists as of now, the idea of citizenship should be redefined. The growing mobility of people, either physically or in networks, would require more flexible conceptions of national citizenship, including partial, temporary, and multiple ones. Moreover, the concept of citizenship could apply to different types of organizations, not only local and national ones, but also quasi-governmental and non-governmental ones (Eichenberger and Frey 2002: 272-74).

The citizenship approach is not, of course, an easy one as it contains both rights and obligations that can differ quite substantially in different types of communities and organizations. Perhaps citizenship should be understood less as a legal category and more as a moral principle which prescribes individual and collective actors to follow a “common ethic” in relation to each other.

These observations lead to demand a new complex type of accountability in which different agents are responsible with regard to different principals in a variety of issue areas. This means that there cannot be any single model or policy by which the democratic deficit can be closed or narrowed down.

One has to be content with piecemeal efforts at democratization that may even contradict each other. Global democracy is not unattainable, but the present road map there is not very clear and reliable.

The problem of accountability is complicated further by the fact that most global problems are not divisible, but they are rather collective or contextual in nature. This does not concern only global climate problems that affect us all, but also such issues as global inequality and poverty (for important new analyses of these problems, see Pieterse 2002 and Pogge 2001). I have argued elsewhere that while inequality and especially poverty are divisible between individuals and groups, their effects in national and global contexts are contextual in nature.

This means that the effects of inequality spread and permeate the entire system; as it is not actor-specific, it is difficult to trace social inequality to any original source and make it responsible for the misery in the world. As any phenomenon has usually multiple causes, the chains of responsibility are difficult to trace (Väyrynen 2002: 111-17). In the same methodological spirit, Robert Wade compares inequality with global warming, another contextual phenomenon: "its effects are diffuse and long-term, and there is always something more pressing to deal with" (Wade 2001: 74).

VIII. Conclusion

The growing multiplicity of levels and actors, the differentiation of various spheres of action, the deepening inter-institutional linkages, and the emergence of contextual problems all make the problem of accountability and legitimacy in global governance more and more difficult to solve, and even address. The demand for international cooperation and institutions and new methods of governance is increasing (Coglianese 2000), but the answer is not always the establishment of new institutions. Spontaneous social movements do not solve the problems of responsibility and legitimacy, but they may be necessary to catalyze new action.

In other words, there is no single institutional response to the legitimacy problems of global governance. This makes it particularly necessary to listen to the other voices; opposition and resistance should be accepted as important elements of global governance. So far, the *mentalité* has been "not only that resistance is not part of governance, but that it is something to be overcome with effective governance" (Latham 1999: 36). Of course, if local resistance is made the alternative of global institutional and normative reforms, then it deserves serious criticism.

Accountability and transparency are often considered key elements of democracy and, thus, preconditions of political legitimacy. Sometimes transparency is even regarded as “a necessary condition for accountability” (Keohane and Nye 2000: 27). In a narrow perspective, this may be true. However, the complex – hybrid or plurilateral – nature of global governance means that transparency is merely a contributing factor to accountability. The main issue in enhancing accountability is how to address asymmetries, hierarchies, and power. Therefore, accountability cannot simply be solved by enhancing transparency and mechanical accountability; the aim should rather be a thorough democratic revolution on different national, regional, and global levels.

It is often asserted that globalization undermines domestic democracy (Cerny 1999). Whether this is the case or not, the most important route to more accountable global governance starts from the strengthening of domestic democratic institutions; their inclusive and participatory traits. It is almost impossible to imagine accountable global governance which is not based on reasonably democratic domestic structures. The democratic accountability of international organizations should be, then, complemented by various transnational and cosmopolitan arrangements that give voice to the underrepresented groups in the world.

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