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Global governance: of, by and for whom?

Is it truly the case, as we are sometimes told, that 'global issues require global solutions'?[1] What would acting in this way entail, and do we currently have the means to do so? What would be required of the familiar structures, actors and processes of politics? Are these fixtures either necessary or sufficient? Would something new need to be created, or could we engineer 'global solutions' by making running adjustments to our already existing organisations of political community? Are global issues now properly the work of international organisations, or should we think instead of supranational ones, or possibly configurations of state and non-state actors? How would the agents of 'global solutions' secure and maintain all of the important mainstays of democratic politics: legitimacy, authority, accountability, inclusiveness, and representation? On what basis would 'solutions' be enacted – and if necessary, enforced?

Such questions are not entirely abstract. They arise quite directly from the challenges posed by concrete matters that most people would regard as global, at least in some respects: the HIV/AIDS pandemic; climate change; criminal and terrorist networks and the kinds of social, financial and electronic networks that facilitate and finance them; and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the capacity to acquire or manufacture them.

However, it is not difficult to assign the qualifier 'global' to any matter that is of considerable human consequence and which cannot be contained within geographical or political boundaries – qualities which certainly pertain to the examples immediately above and many more besides. So it might reasonably be asked whether such qualities necessarily mean that we now have 'global issues' that are in some ways significantly different from, or even a step change beyond the stuff of national and international politics. Are not nations and the

international system already fully engaged with these issues (albeit with all of the contention and competition that routinely attends them)? Besides, not all conditions or relations with global qualities are issues, or a least issues in ways that are open to solutions. For example, global trade is regulated by means of national laws and international regulations and agreements, most notably the World Trade Organisation (WTO). These regulations are problematic in practical ways and are certainly highly contentious in political terms, but trade is a dynamic feature of our ways of life, not a problem that can be solved. In addition, the assertion that global solutions are required for global issues can be a useful rhetorical device for national political purposes, such as distributing responsibility for the creation and/or worsening of a situation and for its rectification. As early as 2001, when President Bush asserted that 'the solution [for climate change] ought to be global', what he had in mind was the involvement of developing countries in shouldering the costs and burdens.[2]

All International Relations (IR) theorists appreciate that the international arena itself has at least one encompassing context – the planetary environment. It is clear that the global physical arena of animate and inanimate processes is subject to a considerable number of anthropogenic impacts, hence crises such as biodiversity loss and climate change. But the activities that create these effects can at least in principle be forbidden, restricted, controlled or regulated in line with our understandings of security and sustainability. Was the Montreal Protocol (which provided for the phasing out of ozone-damaging chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)) a 'global solution to a global issue'? If so, why should we now speak of 'global solutions' – and indeed, global governance – when international politics should be sufficient, at least in principle?

But while scepticism about superficially attractive phrases such as 'global solutions for global issues' is appropriate, it is difficult to sustain the position that the international system is wholly or largely adequate for the regulatory burdens being generated by globalising processes. Note how in the following, a robust defence of the centrality and integrity of states and international system facing a variety of globalising forces, the emphasis is given to authority rather than ability; to states and the international system more as institutions than as actors; and with no mention of the vastly expanded regulatory burdens that come with globalisation – and especially environmental ones:

> Transnational activities are a striking feature of our era which signal
> some of the ways and directions in which human relations on the

planet are changing at the present time. These changes are important. They are technological, economic or social circumstances that statespeople must deal with. They may adversely affect state institutions and may even undermine them or weaken them in certain ways. But they do not constitute or involve moral or legal claims that challenge the authority of state sovereignty. They do not constitute a global political institution that is a rival or alternative to the society of states. At the present time, there is no rival or alternative to the society of states for organising and conducting political life on a global scale.[3]

It is certainly useful to be able to think of human activity and organisation in terms of arenas (physical, economic, political, military) and levels (global, international, national, local). However, the international system is a necessary abstraction, not a free-standing entity either above or outside of the planetary environment or the societies and peoples that comprise it; nor is it impermeable to the effects of their myriad dynamics. Acknowledging this in outline terms is much more straightforward than getting to grips with its implications. So however considerable the standing of states and the international system relative to other actors, it does not necessarily follow that states in any variety of configurations will be sufficient, on their own, for regulating matters that can reasonably be described as global – and there is abundant evidence to suggest that for many purposes they are not.[4] To argue such is not to argue for 'rival or alternative' structures, but to suggest that we need to think less categorically about human social order and the organisation of political community, with a view to dealing effectively with the expanding and perplexing range of regulatory challenges now facing us. And as part of the still incomplete progress from Cold War mind sets, we need to bear in mind that states must deal not only with other actors (and other, powerful states especially), but also with complex dynamics – some of them unwilled, often unanticipated – which vex both human systems and natural systems.[5]

Turning our attention from structures to activities, a related difficulty is that what counts as a significant actor at the international and global levels has not remained fixed. Hierarchies of power now have more analytical purchase in specific contexts rather than in absolute terms. States still matter, but so too do a range of non-state actors – and they matter *to* states: to the compass of their effective power; to their perceived legitimacy; and to their relationships with each other. Although these points have been a commonplace in the globalisation literature for

some time, the state remains a central focus of thinking about world order, partly because of the persistence of Realism in International Relations theorising; partly because globalising forces are so pervasive and unsettling, for states themselves and for their citizens.[6] A world which depends on states and the international system for a great deal of its systemic stability is at the same time globalised and still globalising. This is why changes in the viability, relative standing and deployable power of states are one of the most important measures we have of tracking the trajectories of globalisation and of assessing its many meanings. The conceptual challenges presented by this are as considerable as the practical ones. It has made theorists of all of us.

But in international politics, theory and practice arise together; they are necessarily complementary because all actors, including states and the international organisations they create, must act with imperfect knowledge; with an understanding of causal relations that is incomplete at best; and with consequences that are not entirely predictable. So for example, the application of international sanctions is based on a theory developed at the end of World War I;[7] and more recent is the notion that democracies do not go to war with another – former US President Clinton and George W. Bush's assertion that this is the case[8] is a hotly contested matter in the theoretical literature.[9] Politics is not only the art of the possible: it is also the uncertainty and risk of the possible. And clearly, the uncertainties and the risks are increasing.

Of course, the discipline of IR has a theoretical base and depth that extends beyond the bounds of pressing matters of public policy and inter-state relations; and other related disciplines – International Political Economy, Political Sociology, Strategic Studies – inform it and shape its agendas. But so too do current events: terrorism most recently, but also global environmental crises; infectious diseases; trade disputes; widespread financial turmoil. Sometimes, deliberation is conditioned by urgency, while at other times, change is more incremental, with the drama of change visible only at the 'tipping point' – an observation often made by those advocating immediate and concerted action to forestall the catastrophic and irreversible effects of climate change.

One of the fascinations of the global governance literature is that its compass can be dealt with in terms of the range of significant actors, or in terms of relations or situations that require considerable and frequently novel forms of steering, organisation or control. In practice, one can scarcely write meaningfully about global governance without considering both together, so particular studies tend to emphasise one aspect over the other, while recognising that they are mutually consti-

tutive. Although much the same could be said about the study of IR, global governance offers considerable challenges to the study of IR, especially with respect to significant actors, with states normally occupying a realm that is elevated if not exclusive (a theme dealt with in Chapter 5). Even as the developing literature on global governance implicitly poses the question, 'What would an adequate theory of global governance be a theory *of*?', it is becoming increasingly difficult for IR theorists of any disposition to avoid revisiting the basics: 'What would an adequate theory of International Relations be a theory *of*?' A response to either informs the other.

Global governance *of*: the compass of global governance

In the absence of supranational organisations, and despite the frequency with which the term 'global institutions' has begun to appear, any particular form of global governance might well be considerable, but no one holds the view that we can have global governance of the globe – that is, of human social life in its entirety. The global governance literature is not a search for the political equivalent of a unified field theory in physics. Rather, it is an attempt to describe sets of relations which appear to have outrun our theoretical embrace. These include a dizzying variety of forms of human relatedness – within and between nations, peoples and communities, often remote from one another; and between the full span of human systems (political, industrial, economic) and natural systems.

Before dealing with the subjects of global governance, it is important to note that the term 'global governance' is also used in a summative, descriptive sense – to convey the sum total of all the world's many orders. 'Global' in this sense denotes inclusiveness rather than coherence and comprehensiveness, even for any particular issue area. As expressed by James Rosenau: '…global order is conceived…to be a single set of arrangements even though these are not causally linked into a single coherent array of patterns. The organic whole that comprises the present or future global order is organic only in the sense that its diverse actors are all claimants upon the same earthbound resources and all of them must cope with the same environmental conditions, noxious and polluted as these might be.'[10]

It is the character of our large-scale crises as much as the fact of them which has brought the global governance concept to such prominence. For all of the considerable differences between them, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, climate change, biodiversity loss and global financial turmoil

have a number of features in common: they are rooted in individual behaviours; they are largely unrestricted by borders and boundaries; they span a number of diverse realms (for example, rainforest ecology and international trade in the case of biodiversity loss); and they cannot be contained or addressed by nations acting on their own. Globalisation has not by any means overwhelmed states and the international system, but it has certainly expanded, or perhaps 'deepened' the arena in which they must act. National and international governance issues remain, but even they are now frequently conditioned by global issues – the multiple impacts of HIV/AIDS being a case in point.[11]

It is not difficult to appreciate why so much of the global governance literature is devoted to sector-specific concerns: once a number of human and/or natural dynamics manifest themselves as a crisis in the international system or as an issue which is pervasive, serious and challenging if not unprecedented for one or more states it quickly comes to be regarded as a global issue. Yet few global issues will be open to 'global solutions'. This is because whatever might count as a global governance actor and whatever might count as the activity of global governance, the largest part of managing any human situation (including crises) entails managing relations. This is not to discount or dismiss the importance of scientific investigation, quantitative measures and technical expertise, but '…to challenge our ideas of "relations" as flimsy nets external to the elements which they relate and leaving those elements unaffected, most of all where those elements are human minds. We are not separable from the multitude of relations which we sustain. Like our societies, we *are* systems of relationship.'[12] Seen in this light, environmental issues – even those on the largest scale – are fundamentally relational problems: strongly contested and/or unsustainable practices within and between human and natural systems. The same applies for any other issue over which we exercise governance – and the relational quality of these efforts is evinced most clearly in the work of states to secure themselves in their environment – an important element of which is maintaining the order and stability *of* their wider environment: international *relations*.

Although we can speak of international relations in general terms (as the sum of all inter-state relations), there is no generic form of activity that goes under that term: instead, 'international relations' is the quality of certain forms of state-directed activity. Similarly, we can speak meaningfully of global governance both as a condition and as a form of activity, but there is no generic global governance. Whether we can limit global governance as an activity to certain issue areas, or to particular actors or configurations of actors are important considerations for global governance theorising, together with what might comprise the 'global'

quality of such governance. But as set out at the start of this chapter, there are some conditions (or issues) which have an indisputably global character, however much states and the international system are implicated as the responsible causative or rectificatory agents. How states (and very often) a panoply of non-state agents combine to address such matters is now centre stage in the literature that is concerned with global governance as an activity.[13] Scepticism about global governance from a theoretical perspective notwithstanding,[14] it is difficult to imagine that states and the international system, applying the familiar mechanisms of politics and diplomacy, will be sufficient on their own to address matters as pervasive and embedded as HIV/AIDS, or to ensure a change in the habits of millions and sometimes billions of individuals (discussed further in Chapter 2).

Depictions of sector-specific global governance are frequently top-down in character, but they are (at least implicitly) not exclusive – after all, no one pretends that the climate change regime exhausts whatever might be included in 'global environmental governance'. On any sober assessment of the challenges involved, it will clearly entail the governance of many physical environments that together comprise our world – in addition to the global governance of various sectoral activities (energy generation; commercial fishing; the airline industry) that can have a deleterious effect on the planetary ecosphere. And at a still lower level are relevant individual behaviours, most notably patterns of consumption and travel (further discussed in Chapter 2). We can see in this how in depicting global issues (and the possibility of 'global solutions'), the matter(s) to be governed and the actors involved either actively or passively arise together. In the following, Sir John Houghton, former co-chairman of Scientific Assessment for the International Panel on Climate Change, outlines the task of addressing global warming in a form that is essentially a call to global governance:

> Global pollution demands global solutions. To arrive at global solutions it is necessary to address human attitudes very broadly, for instance those concerned with resource use, lifestyle, wealth and poverty. They must also involve human society at all levels of aggregation – international organisations, nations with their national and local governments, large and small industry and businesses, non-governmental organisations (e.g. churches) and individuals.[15]

We need not speculate about the limits of global governance as an activity below an admittedly difficult to determine 'global' threshold since in any event, widening and intensifying global dynamics are

likely to ensure that the number and range of issues that easily come within the compass of global governance are likely to increase. Certainly there is no current shortage:[16] the planetary environment (really a theme, which itself carries a plethora of terribly difficult, interlinked issues); health; finance; and possibly matters such as terrorism and human rights (the subject of Chapter 10).

It is worth bearing in mind that what constitutes initiatives that amount to global governance is only partly a matter of the qualities of the subject addressed. In the absence of any kind of authority to mandate a global governance initiative, what we are witnessing is the evolution of responses by sometimes novel combinations of established and aspiring actors to events and situations which matter greatly to them, or to those they represent. As the Commission on Global Governance expressed it, global governance '…is a broad, dynamic, complex process of interactive decision-making that is constantly evolving and responding to changing circumstances'.[17]

So global governance as it is now widely understood has been less an invention than a development, much as we have come to use the term 'globalisation'. And if globalisation facilitates, amplifies or accelerates the emergence of global threats, it also performs something similar in terms of the responsiveness of affected parties.

In many respects, then, a simple definition of global governance suffices to outline the scope of global governance as an activity: 'Efforts to bring more orderly and reliable responses to social and political issues that go beyond the capacities of states to address individually.'[18] This general characterisation is a helpful one, but still leaves open the question of what kind of order – and in whose interests.

Global governance *by*: global governance actors

If what were once commonly regarded as national and sub-national actors can no longer be confined to clearly bounded arenas (something implicit in the term, 'transnational corporation'), this is in part because the arenas and levels of human activity have become so porous, so easily traversed. Comprehending this world in the making is becoming ever more difficult as the span of actors and issues increase in number, and as movement and developments between them become more dynamic – and in some cases, less predictable. Indeed, characterising a situation as a global issue (whether or not it can also be deemed a crisis) signals that it is not merely a relatively novel agenda item in international politics, even if the most obvious and immediate

response takes the form of cooperative endeavour on the part of our largest organisations of political community, especially international organisations.

Given the attention that is usually focused on the performance of international organisations as mainstays of global governance,[19] it is easy to overlook how important they are in enabling states to acknowledge a large-scale matter as a *political* one. What makes some developments and some situations political is that they affect the organisation and maintenance of communities in key areas to a degree which necessitates action (or at the very least, contention about action), at the community level. So, for example, if pollution can be externalised – say, dumped in a river and washed out of sight, out of mind, there are no immediate political consequences. If, however, the community's fish supply is thereby depleted, or a community downriver finds its way of life endangered, the actions are invested with considerable political meaning. In an era of global environmental issues, the same principle applies, but in vastly more complex ways, not only for communities, but also in respect of planetary-level physical processes as well. The political meaning of environmental problems is not fixed, or something that can be measured scientifically. Determining political meaning – and from there, political responsibilities – is often a large part of the substance of environmental negotiations. The well-established structures and mechanisms of international organisations are central for this purpose as well as for the more procedural aspects of framing detailed agreements and monitoring compliance to them.

There can be little doubt that states and the international organisations they have created will remain crucial to most forms of global governance, including unexpected crises such as the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), as well as longer-running and/or more routine governance matters – in this case, the global governance of health. As in other areas of human security, globalising dynamics can worsen existing conditions, such as rapidly facilitating the spread of SARS. But globalising dynamics can also improve the prospects for effective governance – and, staying with our example, global health is no exception.[20] In matters of worldwide connectedness or inclusiveness, it is now becoming common for large, dedicated national and international organisations to serve as much as the centres of extensive networks as significant, solitary actors:

As a form of sectoral global governance, the control of epidemics poses some particularly difficult challenges. To begin with,

the international system and the global physical environment – the realm of viruses and bacteria – are incommensurable. We have limited knowledge of the full extent of the microbial world; pathogens are capable of rapid, adaptive mutation; and our preventive governance measures, however extensive and effective, cannot eliminate the fact of human vulnerability to disease. Yet preventive measures, even non-specific safeguards, are an important bulwark against disease outbreaks becoming epidemics, and epidemics pandemics. The inevitable need not be catastrophic. Ensuring this is the business of a considerable range of actors – states most prominently; international law and organisations; regional organisations; the scientific and medical communities; and non-governmental and commercial organisations of many kinds. Ensuring timely cooperation between all of them, against the pull of powerful interests and potentially considerable costs – all sometimes in an atmosphere of fear and suspicion – is the daunting task neatly gathered under the term, 'global governance of epidemics'.[21]

Of all the world's international organisations, it is the United Nations, its programmes, funds and agencies that feature most prominently in accounts of global governance by – and on some accounts, *as* – international organisation.[22] Most notably, the UN's subsidiary bodies perform both normative and functional roles, instigating and organising a wide variety of global governance activities, including aspects of development, environmental protection, food provision and intellectual property, to list but a few. Because of its standing and universal membership, the UN can initiate global conferences on even quite divisive normative subjects (the human rights of women, and of children, for example) and also undertake active, practical roles itself, as we see in the work of WFP, UNICEF and UNDP – often in partnership with non-UN actors, many of them local. Of course, all such UN-directed activity is subject to the political interests and pressures of its member states, often through funding arrangements which are both directive and restrictive.

   A great deal of scholarly attention has been devoted to the 'architecture' of global governance – essentially, high-level international organisations and regimes tasked with creating and maintaining order within and between human systems.[23] In some ways, the architecture metaphor is quite apt: it suggests planning; solidity if not permanence; and an ability to accommodate large affairs, or numerous particulars. On the other hand, it is also oddly static. We surely require structures, but we must also be sensitive to dynamics. The largest and most extensive

'architectures' created at the international and regional levels concern economic and financial management, most prominently the Bretton Woods Institutions. Yet these were created before the capacity of private traders to contract trillions of dollars of exchange electronically – and rapidly; before the emergence of hedge funds and private equity firms as powerful, system-level actors; and before computerised stock market trading – all of which have generated turbulence and even crises in the global financial system.

Does the emergence of new or familiar but greatly empowered actors in global finance challenge the global governance of this arena, or could we say that to the extent that they shape and direct it (not necessarily for the good of all, or for stability and predictability), that they too are agents of global governance? If the 'global governance by' question in any particular field identifies many actors, from a variety of levels of human organisation, then global governance need not be confined to multilateral forums. What follows from this is that considerable interest in the global governance literature includes not only how well our larger, established governance actors have coped in a world of changing dynamics, but also to what extent non-state and private actors now share the stage with them – and with what implications. Forms of global governance activity arising from the expansion of the global governance actor arena have been described as 'governance without government':

> …[S]ystems of rule can be maintained and their controls successfully and consistently exerted even in the absence of established legal or political authority. The evolution of intersubjective consensuses based on shared fates and common histories, the possession of information and knowledge, the pressure of active or mobilizeable publics, and/or the use of careful planning, good timing, clever manipulation and hard bargaining can – either separately or in combination – foster control mechanisms that sustain governance without government.[24]

The conditions brought about by the collapse or critical debilitation of a state's central authority can assume a modicum of stability and order, one form of 'governance without government', albeit with power-based relations likely to be ascendant over structured forms of accountability.[25] However, what is more notable is the number and variety of governance activities now taking place 'below' or outside the direct purview of states and international organisations, a trend that has been underway for many years,[26] but which has greatly expanded in recent years

and gained considerable momentum. Forms of advocacy, of norm creation and consolidation, standard-setting, and self-regulation are in themselves nothing new, but the capacity of transglobal networks and coalitions to affect changes at the international level are a significant development, creating a global politics – an arena in which states and the international system contend (and at times cooperate) with a wide range of non-state actors, either singly (as with Amnesty International, or Greenpeace), or in purposeful configurations (the Jubilee Campaign on developing world debt; the campaign to ban land mines). Although it is not difficult to cite examples of 'governance without government' initiatives to improve the plight of the disenfranchised or to diminish violence and destructiveness, the 'for whom and for what purpose?' question still applies. Non-state actors include organisations which are a good deal more self-interested than the frequent references to progressive NGOs might suggest. The interested parties behind the development of the 1994 Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) entailed contention between states, of course, but non-state actors were not a homogeneous group, with private sector activism pulling in several directions. As one analyst expresses the negotiations leading to the TRIPS agreement, 'Structural factors tipped the scale in the direction of privileged agents and their preferred policies, but [...] [t]he global governance of intellectual property is a dynamic process: focusing on the relationships between micro and macro level factors helps to show how agents reproduce and transform the structure through their actions.'[27]

As globalisation continues apace, the reconstitution of innumerable forms of human relatedness is coming to be recognised as one of its more significant outcomes. As a consequence, it is now widely held that greatly enhanced modes of communication, together with a growing awareness of the power of globalising dynamics for various parties and purposes has brought about the emergence of a 'global civil society'. The concept has a long lineage:[28] one can see a line of continuous development of civil society across centuries to our present, globalised condition when viewed '...not as an object but a complex set of relations that emerged historically in compromises made between Western publics and emerging state powers'.[29] In recent years, 'global civil society' has commanded a good deal of analytical notice.[30] Clearly linked as it is with the idea of 'governance without government', it is also notable that the concept carries the hopes of many in the possibilities of a progressive global politics,[31] not only for practical engagement with what we have characterised here as global issues, but also for the advancement of norms. However, global civil society has no distinct membership, shape or continuity; nor does it

have agency. We might best regard it as a condition of relatedness which in active modes can turn associational links and enhanced means of interaction between disparate groups to common political purposes. But there is nothing inherent in such a very wide range of peoples and organisations that promises benign purpose or that precludes contention within and between its many possible configurations – something clearly evident if we consider corporations to be as much a part of global civil society as NGOs.[32]

Any organisation or group capable of wielding global governance, or of participating significantly in activity we can so characterise, is exercising power – and with every accrual of power, all of the social provisions against its absolute forms and other abuses come into play: legality, authority, legitimacy, accountability. The difficulty with many of the early characterisations of non-state global governance actors is that the novelty of empowerment was privileged over questions of accountability. The emphasis has shifted as some more worrisome accumulations of power and authority have become more visible, including organised crime syndicates, private military companies, largely unregulated financial operations and terrorist networks. Even so, there remains some faith that the extent of the diffusion of various forms of power 'downward' (from states) and 'outward' to widely diverse actors provides a sufficient safeguard against state-like or state-level abuses of power:

> It has been estimated…that the number of transnational corporations exceed 35,000 and that, in turn, these have over 200,000 subsidiaries. While these figures indicate that sizeable areas of global life rest on a form of governance that lacks democratic accountability, they also suggest that the dispersal of authority in globalized space is now so widespread that severe violations of democratic values cannot readily be concentrated in hegemonic hands.[33]

But scepticism about this position properly begins prior to the 'retreat of the state',[34] not least in respect of economic matters. As Rodney Bruce Hall and Thomas Biersteker point out, 'One salient analytical cut into the emerging issue of private authority in the international political economy is the debate about whether the state is complicit in the transfer of its once sovereign prerogative (such as the setting of exchange rates, the maintenance of a stable currency, or trade management).' They continue:

> In such cases, is the state complicit in the devolution of its authority to private actors? Has the state delegated authority, enabled it, or

simply allowed authority to slip away, and for what purposes? Or is the state merely impotent to do much about this devolution of authority? Has the state no mechanism with which to combat the collusion and coordination of firms with interests in minimizing state authority through the development of 'private regimes'?[35]

It is becoming clear that as the number of significant governance actors increases and as sources and forms of considerable power and authority move 'outward' from states and the international system, the regulatory burden is likely to increase – at the very least in terms of confronting these new sources of power, holding them to account and dealing with the direct and indirect consequences of their activities.

James Rosenau has observed that 'If governance on a global scale involves the norms and practices that constrain and empower social, economic, and political entities engaged in collective behaviour in a globalized space, then all of these agents...need to be sorted out. [...] Obviously, an understanding of governance on a global scale is bound to be hampered until it yields an incisive conception of the agents that sustain it.'[36] But the globalised expansion of the arena of significant action and an increase in the number of actors has not merely enlarged the game: it has transformed it. So perhaps we need to think less in terms of actors in the sense of agents of global governance on one hand and those acted upon on the other – and more in terms of participants in shifting relational patterns of activity which continually shape the kinds and degrees of order and turbulence in our world.

Global governance: for what and for whom?

Issue-based studies of global governance (say, of the global environment, or global health) do not on the whole invite questions of the sort, 'for what purpose?' At a minimum, the definition of global governance quoted above – 'Efforts to bring more orderly and reliable responses to social and political issues' – suffices, at least as far as the immediate, functional fulfilment of basic human needs and planetary stability are concerned. These activities can still be controversial, since they inevitably entail negotiation and bargaining over responsibility and costs. But in conditions where threats of a fundamental kind can quickly globalise, contention is more likely to gather around the particulars of practical engagement than about hidden agendas. However, global governance is not merely an extended form of crisis management; and such global governance as is now extant concerns the dis-

tribution of power and the construction and maintenance of orders that plainly advantage certain states, organisations and peoples at the expense of others, or at the cost of irreversible environmental damage. That portion of the global governance literature concerned with fundamentally inclusive and humane global governance[37] has its complement in studies which depict global governance in terms of more self-interested, less beneficent initiatives to shape the contours of our globalising world. One need not regard these as conspiratorial simply because a good portion of them involve a range of non-state actors (criminal organisations notwithstanding). Many involve a degree of state/on-state cooperation – not least the pervasiveness of free market capitalism, the structure of which is founded not only on treaties and international organisations, but also the initiatives of numerous private actors, especially transnational corporations.

Basic and sharply contrasting views on how best to characterise global governance sometimes turn on what is taken to be the more significant arena of action. Those concerned with inequitable social orders, the hope of a global social policy and the more beneficent possibilities of global civil society and networked forms of political action tend to emphasise the aspects of global governance at those social, largely sub-national and transnational levels. Those more concerned with the actors, issues and mechanisms that largely fall within the compass of international relations tend to privilege these matters over related but distinct actors and outcomes. This has led one analyst to suggest that 'Global governance is best described as a muddled blend of *parapolitics* and *metapolitics*, that is, a Janus-faced combination between the continuation of politics within the societal sphere on the one hand, and the assignment of roles to international politics and transnational economics on the other.' The author goes on to argue that 'global governance has a transatlantic organisational bias' and that 'more often than not, ideas about global governance are inherently economistic'.[38]

However, one need not abstract the international realm from lower-level social ones in order to conceive global governance as a pernicious consolidation of the forces of exclusion and domination. Mark Duffield's general depiction of the changing relationship between state and non-state actors is, within the span of the global governance literature, unexceptional: 'While states and governments remain important, and will continue to do so, increasingly they exercise their authority through complex international, national and sub-national governance networks linking state and non-state actors.'[39] But from this

observation, he goes on to depict global governance as an emerging strategic complex; not so much a small number of powerful actors pursuing a common goal, but a much larger configuration, the dedicated and co-opted alike, shaping world order:

> [L]iberal peace is embodied in a number of flows and nodes of authority within liberal governance that bring together different *strategic complexes* of state-non-state, military-civilian and public-private actors in pursuit of its aims. Such complexes variously enmesh international NGOs, governments, military establishments, IFIs, private security companies, IGOs, the business sector, and so on. They are strategic in the sense of pursuing a radical agenda of social transformation in the interests of global stability. […] [T]hey have expanded to constitute a network of strategic governance relations that are increasingly privatised and militarised.[40]

The fundamentals of global governance as an activity

Men and women of widely differing intellectual disposition, political allegiance and practical ambition see in global governance myriad possibilities for good and for ill – and in this regard, the problems of getting to grips with global governance are similar to those that globalisation presents. Indeed, a number of themes are common to both, most visible in polarised positions on matters such as whether globalisation and/or global governance are advancing and consolidating hegemonic domination, while others see in one or both possibilities opening up for the currently disenfranchised, either through the spread of prosperity[41] or through the emergence of global civil society and a range of other relatively novel forms of associational politics. The question of whether in summative terms global governance can be regarded as a political project with a strategic orientation accommodating the interests of an elite returns us to fundamental conceptual questions: the problems of state power in an anarchic world central to nearly all IR theorising;[42] its relationship to globalising processes and whether global governance consolidates them or mediates them;[43] whether we might do best to concentrate on empirical studies, or on political vocabulary;[44] – all the while beset with changes to our social and physical environments we struggle to comprehend for practical, let alone political and intellectual purposes.

   The kinds of 'solutions' spoken of as being available for global issues should probably be regarded as shorthand for political endeavour on

the largest possible scale: inclusive of actors both high and low; intensely political; daunting in terms of organisation and coordination; and often at odds with the established momentum of organisations and the fixed aspirations of individuals. This is the stuff of global governance as an activity, whatever the likelihood of global 'solutions'. Its characteristics, essentially in the form of the challenges it must face, are the subject of the next eight chapters.