

Possible Future Architectures of Global Governance: A Transnational Perspective/Prospective



Sanjeev Khagram

Several (normative-analytic) images of (future) global governance architectures are identified. If realized, any of these images would indeed be preferable to the current world (dis)order, as they all fulfill certain core progressive values. Hence, a synthetic transnational perspective on world dynamics over the twentieth century and its implications for understanding current and possible future global governance architectures are needed. The article concludes with some cautious prospective and prescriptive thoughts on future global governance architectures for a transnational world. **KEYWORDS:** globalization, transnational dynamics, global governance architectures, world orders, networks, states, nation, nation-state system, imperialism, sovereignty, civil society.

Probabilistic and critical research on the structures and dynamics of contemporary global governance has grown and improved dramatically over the last decade—the founding of this very journal is symbolic of these trends. Much attention has also been given to reforms of particular organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But far less possible and creative scholarship on broad, future global governance architectures is available.

In this article, I delineate several normative-analytic images of possible future global governance architectures that have been articulated in some fashion by scholars and practitioners.¹ I then offer a synthetic transnational perspective on world dynamics over the twentieth century and their implications for these possible future global governance architectures. I conclude with some cautious prospective and prescriptive thoughts on future global governance architectures for a transnational world.

I submit that any of the normative analytic images identified here are politically possible. The current transnationalized world we live in seems to suggest that the current hybridity of global governance might

persist for some time. But the longer we gaze into the future, the greater the uncertainty over which of these or others is more likely to emerge, particularly when we remember that 300,000 political units once existed in the world, compared with the 200 countries that populate the globe today.²

Normative-Analytic Images of Future Global Governance Architectures

At least six normative-analytic images of future world orders might be seen as competing for institutional dominance, if not ideological hegemony, in the contemporary world. I include among these models: (1) multilateralism, (2) grassroots globalism, (3) multiple regionalisms, (4) world statism, (5) networked governance, and (6) institutional heterarchy. These models are clearly internally diverse and by no means fully articulated, mutually exclusive, or necessarily exhaustive. Nevertheless, the survey provided in this article offers an initial analysis of normative-analytic images for further refinement and debate.

Because the focus is on images that are normatively desirable for at least some identifiable social actors, other, perhaps even more likely, future scenarios are not addressed in this article. For example, I do not explore the very real likelihood of global “warring parochialisms” entailing continual conflict among different types and sizes of social formations around the world up to the level of civilizational clashes.³ Nor do I examine various types of imperial systems that still exist, are reemerging, or may reemerge. And continuation of the current world disorder over the long term is hardly improbable.

*Multilateralism, or polyarchic interstateism, is by far the easiest normative-analytic image of global governance to see, and various versions of it are arguably the most discussed, advocated, and practically attempted today.*⁴ In its minimal desirable form, this model entails truly functioning and formally equal “sovereign” states⁵ covering the planet, all fulfilling more or less democratic procedural standards internally.⁶ Through transparent, participatory, and accountable processes of principal-agent delegation and monitoring from citizens to states to interstate organizations (IOs) embedded in well-articulated regional or worldwide interstate regimes (IRs, i.e., norms, rules, decisionmaking structures, and processes), challenges and opportunities facing the world society of states (and their citizens) are addressed fairly, effectively, and efficiently.⁷

In its maximal forms, polyarchic multilateralism would entail a greater equalization of interstate authority relations through the democratization

(toward a greater quantity and quality of transparency, participation, and accountability) of various IOs (such as the UN Security Council and the IMF board, for example), and we could envision IRs that would promote widespread demilitarization linked to collective security mechanisms, large-scale interstate tax redistribution processes (like the Tobin tax)⁸, and world forums for civic dialogue and engagement (like periodic and inclusive world conferences and world commissions).⁹ This greater equalization of authority relations could occur with or without a prior, concomitant, or consequential equalization of interstate power relations. Note well that in this image, other actors and levels of governance besides central states do exist, but the latter remain the overwhelmingly predominant constituents and agents of global governance.

Grassroots globalism involves, at minimum, greatly decentering territorial bureaucratic central states and extant IOs and IRs and replacing them with peoples organizing anew in self-governing local communities. It entails radical decentralization of authority relations to the “local” level through omnipresent processes of direct participation in all spheres of political, economic, and social life.¹⁰ This deep democratization is also predicated on eliminating multinational corporations in favor of modes of production, distribution, and consumption that combine the best features of socialist, solidarity, and ecologically embedded economies. Dynamism would be ensured through empowered citizen participation for the continual reinvigoration of societies, especially through the cyclical emergence and waning of transgressive social movements (e.g., feminist, ecological) from time to time.¹¹

Moving to a higher governance level than the local, one could imagine a world of *multiple cooperative regionalisms*. One key notion in this model is that the predominant locus of authority would not be central states but rather various regional collectivities of political units (states or other forms) and societies. An important facet of this model is that these regional collectivities would not be primarily, or mostly, states themselves governing larger geographical territories. The regions could be territorially smaller or larger, organized differently or similarly, but all would meet minimum thresholds of democratic decision-making and institutional capacity. The regions could be more or less self-contained but would cooperatively interact with each other to the extent that transregional problems or opportunities arose. One could also imagine the emergence of interregional organizations and regimes in a world of multiple cooperative regionalisms.

There also remains the enduring vision of a *world state*, more or less democratically constituted and democratically governed.¹² The range of possible institutional arrangements of a world state is potentially limitless

and can draw heavily on the long traditions of theorizing and experimenting with “subplanetary” sovereign territorial political regimes. At the center of the notion of a world state would, however, be the notion that citizens would acquire their ultimate rights and owe their ultimate responsibilities to a global, formal, organized authority with worldwide reach.

A world state would require a planetary military-security establishment with a “monopoly of force,” unless the possibility of complete demilitarization is achieved. Even then, some form of police force with worldwide reach would certainly be needed. It would also have to have a universal tax-collecting agency for it to be considered a state in the most minimal sense. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with a set of ratified, international treaties, could certainly be the base constitutional framework for a world state. This world state could entail a planetary assembly, planetary executive, planetary court, planetary bank, and the like. One could imagine various forms of democracy (e.g., parliamentary, presidential) and forms of federalism with subsidiary territorial units (either homogeneously or heterogeneously) assembled together or constituted anew. Alternatively, or in some mixed form, functional domains (a planetary corporatism?) could be the organizing basis of this world state. And various permutations could be imagined.¹³

Models of *networked governance* come in two versions: the transgovernmental and the multistakeholder. Proponents of both espouse that networks can provide the appropriate balance between the efficiency of decentralized markets, the authority of hierarchical states, and the accountability of democratic systems required for a complex, high-paced, and deeply interconnected world.¹⁴ These networks are likely to cross levels of governance but can be either ad hoc or institutionalized. The key difference between the two types is the nature of the actors that constitute the networks. In the transgovernmental image, it is primarily state governmental and bureaucratic actors, although not just from central states; in the multistakeholder variant, it is state and nonstate actors from various sectors.

In the transgovernmental image, horizontal and vertical networks of governmental officials and agents (e.g., central bankers, judges, legislators, ministers, generals) from disaggregated states share information, increase capacity, and coordinate activity to manage global affairs.¹⁵ In the multistakeholder variant, waxing and waning networks of relevant actors from across sectors (public governmental, private business, and private nonprofit/nongovernmental, in particular) join together in loose institutional arrangements to address global challenges and seize global opportunities in different domains of social life. Global policy or action networks that combine the comparative advantage of groups from across multiple sectors are themselves potentially linked together to fill

critical gaps in global governance. States and interstate organizations are still important but varyingly and not predominantly so.¹⁶

Institutional heterarchy involves a world of multiple types, forms, and levels of authoritative political organizations and units (e.g., communities, religions, interest associations, epistemic communities, companies, states, interstate organizations, social movements, regions, transnational or global networks of various kinds) and various types and levels of governance. But all would meet some minimum threshold of democracy. Individuals or groups would simultaneously participate and consider themselves members and/or citizens of several of these. All individuals and collectivities would be subject to an evolving global constitutional and legal framework. Citizenship would be a dialogical process of “expanding the horizons of one’s own framework of meaning, and increasing the scope of mutual understanding.”¹⁷

Another way of thinking about institutional heterarchy is to imagine a legitimated and formally combined multilayered (MLG) and polycentric (PCG) set of territorial and functional governance arrangements. As suggested by one prominent scholar, “MLG can be defined as an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors—private and public—at different levels of territorial aggregation in more or less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority to any of those levels.” In contrast, the scholar suggests that “PCG can be defined as an arrangement for making binding decisions over a multiplicity of actors that delegates authority over functional tasks to a set of dispersed and relatively autonomous agencies that are not controlled—*de jure* or *de facto*—by a single collective institution.”¹⁸

While other normative-analytic images of global governance are worth considering, this initial mapping offers a continuum of potential futures that have been espoused as desirable by existing groups and coalitions. Empirical traces of each of these six clusters are more or less in existence in the contemporary historical period, particularly multilateralism, networked governance, and institutional heterarchy. But none of them is fully consolidated and unequivocally legitimated. Rather, these and other normative-analytic images are hotly contested.

A Transnational Perspective on Twentieth-Century Dynamics

Let me now offer a transnational perspective on the twentieth century that may help in evaluating the prospects of these various images of future

global governance architectures. I attempt to capture and convey the plurality/pluralization of power relations, the hybridity of identities and multiplicity of memberships/citizenships, the (increasing) porousness of borders and boundaries, and the dynamism of social life more generally. These features certainly depict the contemporary human condition and probably capture dynamics across time more generally.¹⁹

This section provides a reminder of how historically recent and remarkably variable many of the dominant agents and institutional arrangements that ostensibly constitute contemporary global governance are. It thus challenges the self-confident assertion that some of the normative analytic images identified above are simply unrealistic or unsustainable.²⁰ Critical to this perspective is a nuanced examination of both state (or statelike) and nonstate actors, and of the relations and structures that these agents shape and adhere to.

The destruction on September 11, 2001, of the World Trade Center, one of the most potent symbols of Western capitalism, by the Al-Qaida terrorist network is perhaps the most powerful recent example of the “transnationalized” nature of contemporary world dynamics. Although the immediate response of the United States government was an attempt to reinscribe the primacy and centrality of (nation-)states and the (sovereign nation-)state system, even a superficial analysis reveals that various transnational phenomena and dynamics—from money laundering and criminal networks to transgovernmental police coalitions, diasporic communities, religious movements, humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), multinational businesses, and even new-fangled cross-sectoral “partnerships”—were implicated pre- and post-September 11.

Indeed, virtually all aspects of contemporary social life crosses, transcends, and/or transforms extant or ostensible borders and boundaries (territorial, administrative, environmental, cultural, and otherwise). Members of pan-Hindu, evangelical Christian, Bahai, and other religious communities often value spiritual identities as much or more than national-state or ethnocommunal ties. Economic production and distribution is organized around transcontinental investment, manufacturing, and distribution chains. Professional associations set common standards for their members and others working in the same sectors around the world. Migrants and nonmigrants form part of thick, broad social networks linking the cultural, political, and economic activities of those in the sending and receiving societies. Social movements mobilize transborder constituencies around issues such as human rights, gender justice, and sustainable development.²¹

These transnational phenomena and dynamics have clear historical analogues and antecedents. These include, among others, market capitalism, imperialism and colonialism, religious doctrines, antislavery and workers' rights movements, and illegal pirating networks. Indeed, the world has always been in some sense transnational—even states, nations, nation-states, and the sovereign nation-state system have been transnationally constituted and shaped over time and space.²²

Much recent scholarly and public attention has been paid to how the world has become densely populated and conditioned, particularly over the last twenty-five years and (especially) over the last decade, with civil society organizations of various types (e.g., voluntary nongovernmental organizations, social movements, business lobby groups, trade unions, technical and professional associations) increasingly crossing borders and boundaries.²³ Whether there is a global or a transnational civil society or not, many of these collectivities are cross-border or cross-level in and of themselves in one way or another (like the International Hydropower Association or Médecins Sans Frontières), are linked across borders and/or levels in various coalitions or networks, or influence or are influenced by cross-border and/or cross-level phenomena and dynamics.²⁴

One of the central tendencies of both scholars and the public, including myself, has been to highlight what I now call “contemporary progressive civic transnational advocacy.”²⁵ But I use this appellation to refer to the set of “activists beyond borders” that nonviolently and publicly advocate for progressive social change, such as greater equality in the contemporary world. The examples that immediately come to mind are the anti-landmines campaign, Jubilee 2000, and, of course, visible public demonstrations such as the tens of millions of ordinary citizens who took to the streets in antiwar protests in scores of countries on 15 February 2003 or the famed “Battle in Seattle,” which was only one of innumerable actions that are organized for virtually any gathering of erstwhile powerful state, interstate, and corporate representatives.

I will not spend much space recounting, summarizing, and documenting the evidence that demonstrates the growth and growing impact of *contemporary progressive civic transnational advocacy* (as opposed to transnational phenomena and dynamics more generally) or the accumulating knowledge about the condition and strategies that generate(d) this growth and growing impact. While one does not want to overstate the effects and attribute all change to these groups and their activities, it would now be difficult to defend the view that recent progressive civic transnational advocacy efforts in issue areas ranging from the rights of

indigenous peoples to anticorruption to nuclear nonproliferation did not shape processes and outcomes. Perhaps one of the most convincing indicators of this effectiveness has been the growth of critical commentary on the normative desirability of the power of progressive civic transnational advocacy in world affairs. Indeed, opponents of these transnational advocacy groups tend to overstate their power, while supporters of these groups tend to understate their impact.

Rather, I wish, in an abbreviated but hopefully illuminating way, to map the broader array of actors, relations, and structures that constitute (transnationalized) world affairs and dynamics. First, civic transnational advocacy is not always progressive and not at all politically homogeneous. In particular, this advocacy is critical when trying to recognize that politically conservative NGOs and social movements that cross borders and boundaries publicly advocating for social change (either regressive social change or perhaps the social status quo) have grown and gained influence.

These conservative “activists beyond borders” utilize nonviolent types of tactics and forms of power/authority (e.g., mass mobilization, public education, moral persuasion, lobbying, expertise) similar to those of their progressive counterparts. The recent growth of transnational “fundamentalist” Christian mobilizing and advocacy is an excellent example that “going global” is a metarepertoire utilized not by anti-corporate globalization activists alone.²⁶ Moreover, the “progressive” elements of civic transnational advocacy range from those mobilizing for dramatic transformations in extant power structures to those lobbying for partial reforms. An issue area that visibly highlights this range is that of engaging the private sector where (oversimplifying grossly) there is a vociferous debate between the positions of corporate compliance (to clear state or interstate regulations of private business and rigid enforcement mechanisms) versus corporate responsibility (with decentrally generated codes of conduct for private business and primarily voluntary corporate implementation measures).²⁷

Second, while a large amount of attention is focused on highly visible international NGOs like Amnesty International or Greenpeace, the largest numbers of formalized transnational civil society organizations are professional scientific and technical associations like the International Meteorological Association or the International Association of Impact Assessment.²⁸ These groups wield tremendous power *and* authority often invisible to most. But they are only a portion (even if a large majority) of the primarily civic transnational service providers—although often they are also doing advocacy consciously or unconsciously—that shape world affairs and dynamics. These include groups

that concentrate on disaster aid, peacemaking, health provision, reconstruction, and development efforts. To this category one might add (hardly politically homogenous) philanthropies that mostly do advocacy indirectly by providing funds to groups and causes that advance their “missions.”

Third, by expanding the purview still more, the vast world of non-state actors (which may or may not be considered part of civil society) that cross borders and boundaries—such as for-profit companies, business associations, ethnic communities, diasporas, religious groups, organized criminals, and “terrorists” (although terrorism is not an activity associated only with nonstate violent groups)—becomes dauntingly visible.²⁹ These are actors whose modal motivations (e.g., profit, causal ideas, salvation) and/or modal strategies (e.g., the use of moral persuasion or the deployment of physical violence) can be quite different from those that would be included in the domain of contemporary progressive civic transnational advocacy.

Thousands of transnational corporations shape (capitalist) economic production, distribution, and exchange across borders and boundaries. The largest of these businesses (Fortune Global 100) often have gross annual sales larger than the GDPs of most countries and, even if not, often dominate particular economic sectors and/or regions across and within country borders.³⁰ That is why many critics of current world affairs and dynamics are directing their advocacy toward these entities rather than the states they live in, and supporters often are more loyal to their companies than to states or governments. It is worth remembering that a number of these transnational corporations, although they have changed immensely over the years, emerged before or in tandem with many of the contemporary (nation-) states in the world.³¹

While labor is currently not as transnationally mobile as capital, recent history seems to signal (a return to) less domestically focused workers movements.³² The presence of the international labor federations at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and World Economic Forum and other global forums; involvement and leadership in anticorporate globalization campaigns; and novel forms of networking (such as an increasing solidarity among strong labor unions from tropical countries led by Brazil, South Africa, and South Korea) provide evidence of this trend. There is a growing debate that the historical domestication of the then quite transnationally organized rather than internationally linked labor movement during the early part of the twentieth century was a mistake. And there is a growing transnational network/movement of informal workers, particularly women informal workers in the tropics.³³

Extant and novel cross-border and cross-level media and cultural and religious phenomena and dynamics add further complexity to the mix, because some seem to belong to civil society and others to the market sector; still others are linked to the state, and some cross or transcend these somewhat artificial “sectors” altogether.³⁴ Just compare or contrast MTV, CNN, and Aljazeera, for example. Or remember that the Catholic Church has assets and income that make many transnational corporations envious. One could certainly not understand Hindu fundamentalism solely by examining its causes, forms, manifestations, or consequences in India or South Asia. And Al-Qaida is a complex combination of extended family clans, diasporic ethnic and religious networks, military units, legal businesses, registered philanthropies and charities, and hierarchically organized authority relationships.

There are, thus, the “uncivil” phenomenon and dynamics of transnational crime and terrorism—and the complex and dynamically changing interactions between the two. The latter are not just of the “Islamic” variety but can also be Christian, otherwise spiritual, or “secular” in orientation; and they can be supported, if not organized, by government agents with authority over state apparatuses within and across their territorial boundaries.³⁵ And the lines between the former—transnational crime—and transnational capitalism (as in the case of corruption) are often extremely blurred.³⁶ Indeed, the conscious opening of borders and the lack of state capacities in all parts of the world are likely to have contributed to the growth of transnational crime and terrorism over recent decades. And, the reemergence and dramatic growth of the for-profit, either public but often private, military industry might be seen as one of the unanticipated consequences of these patterns and trends.³⁷

Translocal, transstate, and transcontinental migration of various forms (e.g., slaves, refugee flows, temporary migrant workers, educational and professional exchanges, permanent relocation) have also been central features of the world landscape across the twentieth century and before. Diaspora groups or transnational communities spread out across smaller or larger distances play important roles in their adopted and ancestral homelands (and often multiple territorial spaces physically and symbolically in between). More than half of the people who consider Guyana to be their homeland live outside that country. Cross-border remittances—social as well as financial—shape individuals’ life chances, social relations, cultures, and economies more and more. Half of the direct foreign investment in China comes from overseas Chinese. There are proliferating “long-distance nationalisms,” dual citizenship treaties, formal diasporic political representation mechanisms, and other

institutional arrangements, phenomena, and dynamics that cut across, transcend, and cannot be captured by a sovereign nation-state perspective.³⁸

Indeed, if centralized states and the sovereign, territorial (nation-) state system emerged more than three centuries ago, it certainly required a long time before these organizational and institutional arrangements spread worldwide and became (seemingly) more institutionally consolidated and normatively hegemonic.³⁹ For example, by one account, 130 territorially demarcated political units or countries, of which only fifty-five were formally governed by sovereign central states, including fourteen empires, existed as of 1900. The rest—more than 65 percent of the total number of political units—were colonies or protectorates.⁴⁰

Not one of the sovereign states met even the limited standard of an electoral democracy based on the criteria of universal suffrage and competitive multiparty elections, although twenty-five had restricted electoral practices. Four-fifths of the world's population was under the formal rule of monarchies or empires, and many peoples were at least partly if not predominantly governed by traditional authority systems. It thus comes as no surprise to many that there were two dominant inter-linked global governance architectures grafted upon one another—one based on sovereignty and the other on imperialism—competing for dominance and hegemony as recently as the twentieth century.

By 1950, the number of formally recognized countries in the world had grown to 154, including eighty sovereign states, primarily as a result of a wave of formal decolonization. But, correspondingly, nearly one-half of the countries on the planet were still under direct imperial control of one form or another. Twenty-two electoral democracies had come into being along with another twenty with restricted democratic practices, but another twenty-two countries had by this point also instituted “modern” authoritarian or totalitarian political systems. At least 70 percent of the world's population was still under some form of formal nondemocratic rule.

It was certainly sometime during the second half of the twentieth century, with the waning of formal colonialism and the emergence of the Cold War, that the discursive order (or normative-analytic image of global governance) of sovereign statehood reached its apex. Indeed, taking a retrospective view, 112 of the 192 countries in 2000 could be classified as having been within the last 100 years (and a large portion in the last fifty years)—thus relatively recently in global historical perspective—under colonial or imperial domination. Another thirty-three contemporary countries were parts of other countries. In 2000, ostensibly 119 electoral democracies existed, of which eighty-five also are considered

to demonstrate significant respect for the rule of law and civil and political rights.⁴¹

The twentieth-century “sovereign statization” of the world was, moreover, linked to three key transnationally spreading discourses/practices: “national” security,⁴² “national” economic development, and nation-state building. Indeed national security, national economic development, and nation building all required—a fourth and perhaps the most important of the transnationalizing discourses/practices of the twentieth century—the building of centralized, bureaucratic-rational, Weberian states, or so it was (and in many ways continues to be) thought. The primary requirements of state building were correspondingly the ability to collect taxes and to create a substantial security apparatus.⁴³

With respect to security, the “nationalization” of military and police forces to ensure a monopoly of legitimate violence over a population within a territory and the ability to deter foreign invasion (not to mention to wage war externally if necessary) has long been a hegemonic discourse.⁴⁴ Yet even a cursory look around the world makes it clear that there is quite a wide cross-spatial and cross-temporal variation in the effectiveness of state authorities and institutions in achieving this goal; and, of course, there is an even wider range of relative military and police capacities across and within states and societies.

Formal territorial borders between countries have hardly remained frozen over the last century. The demise of the Soviet Union is perhaps the most spectacular example but hardly the only one. Actual “borderlands” are zones that often defy the control of state authorities, including the United States, in any of these areas: security, economic management, or cultural control.⁴⁵ Many states are pretty weak at providing for domestic human security. It is correspondingly important to note that revolutionary and “ethnic” violent conflicts (most of which cross country borders and are “transnational” in one way or another) far outnumbered interstate wars between 1946 and 1999.⁴⁶ Indeed, the Cold War created an illusion of stability, as increasing incidents and a growing magnitude of violent conflict around the world characterized the period between 1950 and 1989.

Nation building has returned with a vengeance to the public debate since the end of the Cold War, but without much more clarity than when it appeared in the 1950s as to what it entails or how to achieve it.⁴⁷ To speak of any current country being a singular nation even as an “imagined community” seems a stretch.⁴⁸ Finding a “nation-state” seems even more phantasmic. Whether it be the result of “nonintegration” of extant ethnic groups, cycling movements of peoples, the emergence of entirely new identities and communities, or the lack of fixity and continual flux

of borders and boundaries, nations that are coterminous with formal territorial states do not exist anywhere, if they ever did.⁴⁹

National economic growth, based on strong, technocratic state intervention, import-substitution-based industrialization, the commercialization of agriculture, population control, and a range of other policies, dominated the discourse and attempted practice of development for nearly three decades after World War II.⁵⁰ While the interpretations of aggregate statistics on economic growth and poverty alleviation can be debated, the ability of most states to effectively formulate and implement this type of development strategy varied tremendously across countries and across time.⁵¹ Certainly, the great ideological battle between Western capitalism and Soviet communism was lost by the latter, but capitalisms have yet to demonstrate their value to many peoples around the world. The record of structural adjustment and neoliberal economic approaches over the last twenty years is as hotly contested, if not more so.⁵² While this ideology gained hegemonic status in the 1980s, the adoption of neoliberal policies has further marginalized many states from the political economic landscape or made them targets of intense criticism.

The sovereign state project as a global governance model thus remains incomplete in a sympathetic reading, obsolete from a critical perspective, and from another vantage point. But few of these analyses start from the basic fact that different “nation-states” have had dramatically different histories, might thus be at different points today, and/or are moving in different directions. In the contemporary world, not to mention historically, we have everything from superstates, to juridical (but not empirical) states, to failed states.⁵³ With the rise and spread of more recent hegemonic transnational processes and discourses—including neoliberal marketization, electoral democratization, decentralization, debureaucratization, and globalization—the contradictory pressures on these already tremendously variable states and the weight on the sovereign-state system have only become greater.

Over the last half-century, during which this sovereign statization spanned the globe, the number of global and regional IOs has increased dramatically, to say the least, and many have nonnegligible amounts of relative autonomy and capacity to significantly shape events on multiple scales and levels. While there is a great deal of bemoaning or celebrating the relative weakness of the United Nations, one should not forget that it is only a little more than fifty years old.⁵⁴ The Bretton Woods agencies, particularly the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, have seemingly played a more direct and powerful role in global governance, but the greater material resources of these organizations should not blind us

from the powerful cultural effects the UN has had over the years since its founding. Much attention is most recently, and rightly so, focused on the World Trade Organization as perhaps the most powerful of contemporary global-level IOs, but others, like the International Criminal Court, should not be too quickly discounted for their apparent lack of capacity.

A Transnational Prospective on Future Global Governance Architectures

A transnational perspective of the twentieth century world suggests that multilateralism, let alone polyarchic interstatism, by itself was not on the agenda for *global governance*, or could even be imagined, in 1900. Rather, it was some combination of that institutional arrangement along with various forms of colonial and imperial rule. The trends and patterns identified in the previous section might suggest that the conditions for polyarchic interstatism have become more favorable since the 1950s and the end of the Cold War. De jure though not de facto sovereign states have come into existence all over the world that more and more ostensibly can be characterized as having democratic political systems.

But in a world where the material, ideational, and phenomenological aspects of life have been and are becoming ever more transnationalized (albeit differently across space and time), why should we expect that current or future global governance architectures are, will be, or should be organized around a partly mythical, potentially idiosyncratic nation-state and sovereign-state system model? Different combinations of transnational actors and processes shaped the emergence and evolution of the system of sovereign states, as well as major phenomena and dynamics—from race relations to the Cold War to trade.

At the very least, it must be expected that the world will likely remain or become more transnationalized for the foreseeable future. Given this, can a model of multiple interactive regionalisms emerge in some near or distant future? Should we expect that models of networked governance or institutional heterarchy will be the likely “winners”? Or are they already? Some argue even now that what produces order in the world are transgovernmental networks, which just need to be formalized, replicated, and legitimated. Others claim that institutional heterarchy with rooted cosmopolitan forms of citizenship is not only the most normatively preferable model but is already being ushered in.

Certainly, the most likely of the normative analytic images to retain or gain dominance and hegemony in the short term are multilateralism/polyarchic interstatism, networked governance, or institutional heterarchy. The

central difference between the three is the predominant relative level(s) and source(s) of legitimate authoritative decisionmaking—states, global networks, or multiple types and levels of political organizations. Another, and quite related, key distinguishing feature among the three would be the political unit or units to which citizens would direct their primary (and secondary, tertiary, and so on) allegiance or allegiances.

While elements of these normative analytic images of networked governance and institutional heterarchy are already in existence, they are neither fully functioning nor fully legitimated. For example, “private” forms of authority have proliferated in recent years to regulate such corporate practices as the International Standards Organization codes and the Global Reporting Initiative’s principles for triple bottom line reporting. These are neither utopian on the one hand, nor institutionalized on the other at this point. Whether they will become consolidated and habituated will depend partly on their ability to “deliver the goods” and partly on whether they become embued with positive normative valence over time.

But one should not discount grassroots globalism, interacting regionalisms, or world statism too quickly or easily. For example, given that some 300,000 political units existed around the world at one time several millennia ago and that now less than 200 cover the globe, another century might be all the time that is needed for a smaller set of regionalized political units to emerge or be imposed. Or if an inter-linked series of devastating natural and human-induced crises (e.g., global warming, pandemics) wreak havoc around the globe, might grassroots globalism seem not only less utopian but actually more realistic than dysfunctional multilateralism?

The localist and world statist images do not get the attention of the others, even of interactive regionalisms, and when they do, they are often discarded as impractical, unrealistic, and utopian. This may indeed be the case. Yet, the different sets of transnationally allied political forces (like those that organized the World Social Forum or World Economic Forum) that strongly espouse and promote these images may be quite important in determining the directions of global governance toward one of the other more likely candidates. Localists, regionalists, and globalists arguably have been among the most creative producers of novel governance architectures in recent times, even if their models might not become instantiated in total. Such innovations in and innovators of global governance certainly seem to still be in short supply relative to the need and growing effective demand.

There is certainly likely to be sufficient consensus that any one of the normative-analytic architectural images of global governance outlined in

the first section of this article is manifestly preferable to the current world (dis)order. First, each entails substantial democratization (increased transparency, participation, and accountability) of decisionmaking relative to the more hierarchical, collusive, bureaucratic, and technocratic forms that currently exist. Second, each could contribute to a significant equalization of power—domination and hegemony—and authority relations across the world. Third, the democratization of decisionmaking and equalization of power relations entailed in these images would probably engender a more peaceful, just, diverse, and sustainable world.

Regardless which of these or other potential normative-analytic images of global governance are promoted and hopefully achieved, one of the key analytic principles that should form the foundation of these institutional arrangements is the recognition and internalization of the transnational nature of world affairs and dynamics. And a key normative principle, in addition to that of the democratization of authority relations and equalization of power relations, should be a reembedding of economies in societies and societies in natural environments.

Perhaps one of the most innovative models for global governance following these principles would be a world state based on ecological units such as water sheds, air sheds, or some other appropriate ecoregion, geographically scaling up to the biosphere itself. Sufficient subsidiarity and decentralization of authority along with vertical and horizontal coordinating mechanisms would be likely. At each ecoscale, more or less direct and participatory democratic processes of decisionmaking would be developed. The overarching principle would be of eco- or biocitizenship. And if all species, not only humans, were thus endowed with rights, the reembedding of society in nature would be all the more institutionalized. Such an approach would have profound implications for sustainable security and development on multiple scales, including the planetary. As stated previously, if 300,000 political units once existed in the world, and we now have approximately 200 countries, why not such a world state as this? It may not be a teleological necessity, but it certainly is a political possibility.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to delineate several normative-analytic images of future global governance in the context of the existing contemporary transnational world. The hope is that it will engender more creative debate, reflection, and action on possible architectures as transnational phenomena and dynamics continue to expand, deepen, and

become even more complex. Without a much more concerted focus on the “forest” of broader global governance architectures, the net result of the necessary but insufficient separate analysis and disjoint restructuring of specific organizations and institutions will likely be continued disfunctionality. 🌐

Notes

Sanjeev Khagram is director of the Lindenberg Center for Humanitarian Action, International Development and Global Citizenship, and professor of public affairs and international studies at the University of Washington. He coleads a multiyear initiative on transnational dynamics and architectures of governance and is cowriting a book on the contested transnational field of corporate citizenship and market regulation.

1. Normative-analytic images entail something more than Weberian ideal types. They are rather parsimonious clusters of ingredients assembled to create pictures of (potential) realities. They are analytic in that they are conceptual abstractions. They are normative in that they link together ostensibly desirable ingredients into clusters and, arguably, have contemporary groups and coalitions that promote these images more or less actively.

2. Alexander Wendt, “Why a World State Is Inevitable: Teleology and the Logic of Anarchy,” *European Journal of International Relations* (forthcoming).

3. See Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000); Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine, 1995); and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

4. Robert A. Dahl has argued that polyarchy is unlikely to be achieved at the global level and that international organizations should be understood and treated as bureaucratic bargaining systems rather than as democratic institutions. Democratization is certainly possible even if democratic systems as conventionally understood might not be possible. One must not forget that the deliberative democratic forms associated with smaller polities did not transfer to the institutions associated with the nation-state.

5. All states would exhibit a form of “embedded autonomy.” See Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

6. See John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), for a philosophical argument for this type of well-ordered world society of states, but one in which some states are “liberal” and others are “illiberal.”

7. See Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

8. The Tobin tax is a simple sales tax on currency trades across borders (see www.ceedweb.org/iirp/factsheet.htm).

9. See, for example, Volker Ritterberger, ed., *Regime Theory and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); and *The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

10. The literature on deliberative democracy at the local level offers plenty of empirical examples and ideas along these lines. Very few of these scholars would probably argue for a model of grassroots global governance based on local deliberative units as primary and predominant.

11. See, among others, Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, eds., *The Case Against the Global Economy: For A Return to the Local* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997).

12. See Wendt's provocative draft paper, "Why a World State is Inevitable: Teleology and the Logic of Anarchy."

13. The Society for World Federalism has long supported and advocated for a global state.

14. For a much less optimistic variant of a decentered, network-governed world, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

15. Anne-Marie Slaughter, "The Real New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 183 (September–October 1997). See also Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations," *World Politics* 27 (October 1972).

16. See Jan Martin, Wolfgang H. Reinicke, and Thorsten Benner, "Beyond Multilateralism: Global Policy Networks," *International Politics and Society* 2 (2000): 176–188; and Steve Waddell, "Global Action Networks: A Global Invention to Make Globalisation Work for All," *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 12 (winter 2003).

17. David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From Modern States to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Daniele Archibugi and David Held, *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (London: Polity Press, 1999).

18. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Neo-Neo Functionalism," in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez, eds., *European Integration Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

19. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Saskia Sassen, *Denationalization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), for similar ideas.

20. A much more elaborated depiction and analysis of world dynamics over the last 500, 1,000, or even 3,000 years is required to fully demonstrate the claims of this article. For an illuminating attempt along these lines, see Enrique Dussel, "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World System and the Limits of Modernity," in Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds., *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998).

21. The ideas and language for this section are partly derived from a larger initiative the author coleads with Peggy Levitt. See www.transnational-studies.org.

22. Even in a book that offered one of the strongest cases for focusing on the centrality of states, the editors clearly acknowledged that states are shaped by different types of transnational processes and dynamics. See Peter Evans et al., eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985).

23. The literature on these groups and their activities has mushroomed over the past decade. For a couple of excellent reviews of the recent literature, see Richard Price, "Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy in World Politics,"

World Politics 55, no. 4 (July 2003); and Thomas Risse, "Transnational Actors and World Politics," in Water Carlsnaes et al., eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002).

24. For a proponent of the "transnationalist" civil society frame, see Ann Florini, ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment Press, 2000). For a "globalist" perspective, see the various editions of *Global Civil Society Yearbook*, published by the Centre for Civil Society and Centre for Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Politics.

25. See Sanjeev Khagram and Sarah Alvord, "Locating Contemporary, Progressive, Civic Transnational Advocacy," in L. David Brown and Srilatha Batliwala, eds., *Claiming Global Power* (Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 2005).

26. See Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

27. See Ralph Hamann, Nicola Acutt, and Paul Kapelus, "Responsibility Versus Accountability?" *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 9 (spring 2003).

28. See John Boli and George Thomas, eds., *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1870* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

29. See Daphne Josselin and William Wallace, eds., *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and Rodney Bruce Hall and Thomas J. Biersteker, eds., *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

30. The literature on transnational corporations is too vast to even begin a listing here. For a very early introduction, see George Modelski, ed., *Transnational Corporations and World Order: Readings in International Political Economy* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1979).

31. See Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Leslie Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

32. See August Nimtz on Marx and Engels as prototypical transnational activists, in Sanjeev Khagram et al., eds., *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks and Norms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); and Thalia Kidder and M. McGinn, "In the Wake of NAFTA: Transnational Workers' Networks," *Social Policy* 25, no. 4 (summer 1995).

33. I am referring to the prominent transnational network WIEGO, Women in the Informal Economy Globalizing and Organizing.

34. On religion, see, for example, Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James P. Piscatori, eds., *Transnational Religion, the State and Global Civil Society* (Boulder: Westview, 1997).

35. For many people around the world, of course, state-sponsored transnational terrorism is a signature tactic of various governments and presidential administrations of the United States.

36. See Nikos Passas, *Transnational Crime* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1999); and Watler Enders, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening? A Time Series Investigation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 3 (2000).

37. P. W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

38. See Aiwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logic of Transnationality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); and Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Moser, eds., *New Approaches to Migration: Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home* (London: Routledge, 2001).

39. See John W. Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (July 1997).

40. Ibid.

41. These statistics come from Freedom House, "Democracies Century: A Survey of Global Political Change in the 20th Century," in *Freedom in the World: 1999–2000* (Washington, D.C.: Freedom House, 2000). While there are numerous problems with this dataset, it does provide some insight into broad patterns of the twentieth century.

42. Although, for the colonial world, national security was linked to the somewhat broader concept of self-determination.

43. See the special volume of *Global Governance*, "Governance After War," edited by Charles C. Call and Susan E. Cook, vol. 9, no. 2 (2003).

44. See Kenneth Waltz, *The Theory of International Relations* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1979). For one critique, see Helen Milner, "The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations: A Critique," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991).

45. See H. Richard Freeman and Peter Andreas, *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Thomas W. Gallant, "Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism and State-Formation: Transnational Crime from a Historical World Systems Perspective," in Josiah Heyman, ed., *States and Illegal Practices* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); and David Kyle and Rey Koslowski, eds., *Global Human Smuggling: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

46. See the statistics assembled by Ted Robert Gurr and his colleagues, "Global Warfare Totals, 1946–1999," and "Trends in Violent Conflict," at www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity. See also Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

47. See Marina Ottaway, "Think Again: Nation-Building," *Foreign Policy* 132 (September–October 2002).

48. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

49. The extensive literature problematizing the "nation-state" is impossible to cite here, but see, for example, Matthew Sparke, *Hyphen-Nation-States: Critical Geographies of Displacement and Disjuncture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

50. See Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

51. Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Alice H. Amsden, *The Rise of the Rest: Challenges to the West from Late Industrializing Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

52. Gerald Meier and Joseph E. Stiglitz, eds., *Frontiers in Development Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

53. One study notes, for example, that approximately forty states "died" during the twentieth century. See Tanisha M. Fazal, "State Death in the International System," manuscript, Columbia University, 2003. On juridical and empirical states, see Robert H. Jackson and Carl C. Rosberg, "Why Africa's

Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood,” *World Politics* 35, no. 1 (1983). On failed states, see Robert Roberg, ed., *Why States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

54. For more positive perspectives, see John Gerard Ruggie, “The United Nations and Globalization: Patterns and Limits of Institutional Adaptation,” *Global Governance* 9, no. 3 (July–September 2003); and Madeline Albright, “MisUNderstood: Why the United Nations Is Indispensable,” *Foreign Policy* 138 (September–October 2003).