PALGRAVE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE DIFFUSION OF POWER IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

International Political Economy Meets Foucault

Edited by Stefano Guzzini and Iver B. Neumann

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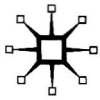

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First published 2012 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978–0–230–30277–8

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

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978–0–230–24115–2 (paperback)
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Preface

This volume originated at an ECPR joint workshop session in Lisbon, Portugal, in April 2009. We sought to provide a forum for researchers who shared a wider understanding of governance as including aspects of structural power and informal rule, where they could meet and discuss for almost a week. One of the core concerns of the workshop was to encourage more debate between scholars working within the fields of international political economy (IPE) and Foucauldian studies. We remain grateful to the participants for engaging in this not always frictionless exercise. Since concepts acquire their meaning from the theories in which they are embedded, our debates required running simultaneous theoretical translations, as well as some theoretical multilingualism. However painful they may be, such translations offer the possibility of trenchant criticism combined with the enrichment of one's own and other people's approaches, because they provide a critical angle that is both internal and external. Translations thus become part of another language, even while they remain part of the voice of the originating language.

Not all of the papers could be selected for this volume, and some, duly revised, have been published elsewhere (Nik Rajkovic in the *European Journal of International Relations*; Jason Sharman in *International Studies Quarterly*). We also went on to invite scholars to cover the issue of private governance and apply Foucault directly to IPE (see chapters by Graz and Nölke, and Vestergaard). We hope that this volume, with its by now thoroughly reworked chapters, will begin to succeed in redirecting the analysis of governance away from its current too exclusive focus on questions of steering.

Running this workshop together was also a good experience for us. By the time this volume appears, we will have known each other for 20 years, having met for the first time in 1992 at the inaugural Standing Group of International Relations conference in Heidelberg, Germany. Over the years, we have kept up our very own IPE-meets-Foucault conversation, usually over meals in Florence (Italy), Oslo (Norway) or Copenhagen (Denmark). It was good, finally, to co-publish.

Stefano Guzzini and Iver Neumann
January 2012, Copenhagen and Oslo

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Contents

List of Tables and Figures vii

Preface viii

List of Contributors ix

1 The Ambivalent 'Diffusion of Power' in Global Governance 1
Stefano Guzzini

2 Private Military and Security Companies, Territoriality and the Transformation of Western Security Governance 38
Elke Krahmann

3 Intellectual Property Governance: The Emergence of a New and Contested Global Regime 71
Valbona Muzaka

4 Nodal Governance: The Diffusion of Power in Global Forest Governance Networks 91
Kathleen McNutt and Jeremy Rayner

5 The Limits of Transnational Private Governance 118
Jean-Christophe Graz and Andreas Nölke

6 Bankers Governing the Environment? Private Authority, Power Diffusion and the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative 141
Susan Park

7 Disciplining the International Political Economy through Finance 172
Jakob Vestergaard

8 The Diffusion of Power and the International 'Discovery' of 'Diasporas' 203
Rahel Kunz

9 Patterns of Global Governmentality and Sovereignty 229
Tanja E. Aalberts

10 Conclusion: An Emerging Global Polity 256
Iver B. Neumann

Index 264

Tables and Figures

Tables

1.1 Approaches to governance and their problematiques 28
2.1 Domestic security providers 2007–2008 42
2.2 International security companies 45
2.3 International interventions 46
4.1 Forestry Virtual Policy Network inbound links to network websites 104
4.2 Forestry and climate change Virtual Policy Network inbound links to network websites 107
4.3 Forestry Virtual Policy Network website centralization 110
4.4 Forestry and climate change Virtual Policy Network website centralization 110
6.1 Top 20 banks worldwide FY 2008 by market capitalization and environmental codes, standards and initiatives signed 144
6.2 Environmental codes, standards and organizations signed by UNEP-FI signatories 158
7.1 Overview of standards of 'best practice' 190
7.2 Types of actors in the standard-setting process 191
7.3 Agents in IFA standard-setting 193

Figures

2.1 British security industry turnover 44
4.1 Forestry Virtual Policy Network 103
4.2 Forestry and climate change 106
6.1 Number of UNEP-FI signatories that have signed other initiatives 159
6.2 Number of environment initiatives that UNEP-FI signatories have joined 159
7.1 Reward and punishment in the IFA 183

1

The Ambivalent 'Diffusion of Power' in Global Governance

Stefano Guzzini

This volume brings together scholars in fields ranging from International Political Economy (IPE) to Foucauldian governmentality studies to shed light on the analysis of global governance.[1] Such an undertaking is not new. Against the background of heavily IPE-dominated discussions in International Relations (IR) (the heyday of the journal *International Organization*), a first encounter took place in the theoretically rich 1980s. Analysts, later to be called constructivist had tried to use regime analysis as an opener for questions that were akin to a Foucauldian understanding of political order (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986; Kratochwil, 1988). In turn, some Foucauldian analysis met with regime analysis or derived approaches (see e.g. Ashley, 1989; Keeley, 1990). A second rapprochement occurred once the discipline had taken on the task to understand, explore and integrate constructivist thought within IR, during a decade stretching from the early to the later *magna opera* of that school (Kratochwil, 1989; Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1999). By the time constructivism was accepted – visible in the official inclusion as one of the main schools of thought (Katzenstein et al., 1998) and in the emergence of authoritative programmatic syntheses (Adler, 1997; Ruggie, 1998; Guzzini, 2000a) – Foucauldian analysis again met various institutionalist and constructivist approaches to international governance, now also in the fields of 'high politics', such as international security. Timid at first (Prakash and Hart, 1999), this rapprochement recently became more substantial by reverting to an earlier focus on power (Guzzini, 1993, 1994; Barnett and Duvall, 2005b) and by developing an independent Foucauldian research programme on the international political order (Sending and Neumann, 2006; Hynek, 2008).

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This book is an attempt to combine the findings of these two waves of debates with a focus on the nature of the international political order or governance. It aims to include:

1. the sensibility of IPE scholars to the development of private and market authority in global governance;
2. the constructivist focus on impersonal rule through social (including discursive) practices;
3. a Foucauldian research agenda on governmentality in which practices of the self affect both the agency and the subject of order.

This volume's main theme is a core problematique of global governance, namely whether or not power has been diffused in world politics. The principal puzzle is that combining the three literatures mentioned above prompts a fundamental ambiguity as to its answer. On the one hand, many approaches, in IPE or transnational studies, have established a diffusion of power away from the state to private actors or impersonal forces (the market as legitimate mode of value distribution). Whether with regard to the governance of finance, the environment or indeed security, power is seen as 'slipping away', diffusing from the state, but often not really captured by anyone or anything else. Here, power is diffused in the sense of being 'shared', but it is also 'dispersed', 'diluted' or 'dissipated'. On the other hand, and here Foucauldian approaches are prominent, this diffusion is seen as a new mode of governance itself, rather than its dispersion. Instead of seeing power moving between actors or 'evaporating', to use Susan Strange's expression, power itself is reconfigurated and the actors themselves are seen as part of a new way in which international political order or power is to be understood. Instead of concentrating on the King and whoever may have taken his place, this type of analysis sees a far more efficient way of rule operating, in which power is reaching into, and using the lever of, market actors and global civil society. Here, power is diffused but not diluted; it expands into every niche of world society and has, through this different mode, increased. Although, in this new mode of governance, more agents have been 'empowered', this empowerment goes hand in hand with a widened and deepened system of rule that applies to and works through those very empowered agents.

This volume explores to what extent these two visions are really antithetical or whether they can be combined, and, if so, how. This introductory chapter lays the groundwork by specifying the central terms: the diffusion of power and governance. It does so in two steps.

The first step is more conceptual. It provides the definitions of the core terms, specifying the basic understanding of governance as order, as well as four central problematiques of global governance as it relates to the diffusion of power. In a second step, the chapter provides an overview of different theoretical approaches to understand those problematiques of governance. It aims to show the theoretical shifts necessary to move from one framework to another, and hence the possibilities or not to combine their respective insights. The other chapters of the book develop empirical facets that apply and also combine those different frameworks.

Which governance? Which diffusion of power?

To understand whether or not there has been a diffusion of power in global governance, and whether this has diluted or enhanced governance, it is important to specify one's understanding of what we mean by governance in the first place. Although this first clarification should be self-evident, it is not uncommon to see analyses assume the very meaning of governance. Yet, as we will see, that meaning is not given, nor obvious, and is moreover directly connected to the wider analysis of politics and power. It is not that we have a 'problem of governance' to which different theoretical approaches give different answers; we have different theoretical approaches which give different meanings to governance and its problems.

In the following, I propose to think about governance in terms of 'political order', whereby 'political' stands for anything affecting the 'public interest' or 'common good'. This is a wider definition than most approaches. Yet, as the discussion of different definitions shows, it is present in many of them, either directly or indirectly (see the discussion in Späth, 2005). Such a relatively non-exclusionary definition is justifiable, if not required, when comparing and discussing alternative approaches, rather than presenting a single one.

On the basis of this understanding, this section will first discuss two main approaches to governance, one which features the often hierarchical basis of agential ordering, and one which focuses on the more diffuse origins and effects of order: steering capacity versus (informal) rule. In a second step, the section deals with the relationship between understandings of governance and concepts of power, showing important affinities. At the same time, I will argue that the two concepts of power and governance, although related, should not be conflated. More generally, but surely for the purpose of this book about the relationship

between the diffusion of power and global governance, I will insist on keeping the two concepts apart. Finally, four specific problematiques of governance can be derived – agency, scope, mechanisms and normative content – that will guide the analysis of the diffusion of power in this volume.

Governance as political order: Steering capacity versus (informal) rule

The usual starting point for the definition of governance is that it is a term similar to, but distinct from, government. Putting it this way, it immediately suggests a core definition: those things done by governments, yet done by someone else or a combination of actors. 'Governance without government' (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992) here means the replacement of (state) government by functionally equivalent actors. Such a definition stays government-centred and organizes our thinking around the paradigm of (state) government for the understanding of political order in international society.

But, and this relates to the other side in our analysis, 'governance without government' can also mean something else. It can stand for the achievement of political order with other means or through other modes than with classical government tools. In this vision, governance is not thought of in terms of (state) government but beyond it; indeed, order through government (by whatever actor) is but a part of governance. The first take on 'governance without government' mentioned before more or less fixes the rules of the international game, but alerts us to the different players. The second approach takes the multitude of actors for granted and explores the ensuing rules of the game. By doing so, this second understanding redefines the core of politics or political order. This section introduces these two basic understandings.

By looking for functional equivalents to government, the first approach leads to analyses which understand global governance in terms of 'steering' and steering capacity, usually with an institutionalist and public policy-framework. Depending on the type of institutionalism at hand, the visions of governance differ. At one end, this can lead to definitions of governance which strongly emphasize the executive branch of government, such as when David Lake writes: 'It is the design, construction, and maintenance of mechanisms to enforce agreed upon behaviors that lies at the heart of contracting, as a process, and governance, as both an analytic concept and the set of mechanisms actually employed' (Lake, 1999, p. 33).

In a wider public-choice framework, this focus on steering capacity produces the classical collective action problematique. When

government is 'metaphorically' seen as 'a firm producing goods and services in exchange for revenue', it is only one step to define governance as 'a form of exchange through which... potential joint gains are realised' (Lake, 1999, p. 38), such as, for instance, the reduction of transaction costs. Governance thus being understood as a collective good, 'any effort to arrange for governance necessarily confronts dilemmas of collective action' (McGinnis, 1999, p. 55).

But the focus on steering capacity is also visible in more sociological institutionalist approaches which would allow for wider understandings of political ordering than public choice. Common to those approaches is a stronger emphasis on rules and the logic of appropriateness. Still, even then, the analysis of governance has been reduced to the analysis of 'formal institutions designed to obtain collective goals' adding only a more ideational understanding of the origins of those institutions (Haas, 1999, p. 104), although, more recently, we have seen at least a better conceptualization of the relational aspects of authority and hence agency in global governance (Avant et al., 2010b). Finally, a sociological institutionalism can recover regime theory's original more diffused conception of institutions as exactly not entailing only formal institutions (i.e. mainly international organizations),[2] when, for example, governance is defined as the 'process by which rules are generated' (Sandholtz, 1999, p. 89).

This last definition goes beyond a sheer focus on steering capacity and points to a second general way of approaching governance, namely as (informal) rule. Several conceptual shifts are necessary for this. First, political order is understood more through its effects than through its source.[3] It is not starting from agents and their potential role in the provision of order, but from that which makes the political order and then back to its possible originators. Second, it includes the analysis of constitutive rules for understanding the 'rules of the game'. And, finally, it does not assume intentionality or control for the understanding of order. If in Rosenau's succinct definition 'governance is order plus intentionality' (Rosenau, 1992, p. 5), here it is not. It allows for both unintended consequences (which Rosenau's definition could also accommodate) and non-agential or structural effects (for the different underlying conceptions of power, see Guzzini, 1993). It implies that a mere analysis of steering capacity does not cover rule; and also, that by understanding rule in a wider sense, one has a better grasp of actual steering capacity.

Hence, a comprehensive definition of governance is needed to allow for an analysis which does not wish to prejudge against any of the two main approaches to governance; indeed, one that wishes to explore a

possible common ground. Sticking with definitions derived from public policy approaches runs the obvious risk of limiting the theoretical intake to a discussion of institutionalisms.[4] In this book governance will be understood as the provision of order, where that provision can be based on steering capacity and/or (informal) rule. And it is a 'political order' in that it looks at the way that order defines and realizes the common good or public interest.

Such a focus on governance as order is not new to IR. In fact, it may come more naturally to IR scholars who have to think of politics without an overarching government around. It is probably not accidental that the English School in IR has been particularly sensitive to this because it is based upon the idea that there is an international society, yet not one akin to the national one. The missing world government does not imply that there is no social contract on the global level, or no institutions of international politics; nor is it only an intermediate stage temporarily and teleologically removed from its ideal, the world government. But to be able to see its specificity, the very definition of politics and of the 'international', had to be divorced from the model of national governments. In this context, Hedley Bull argued against a 'domestic analogy' (Bull, 1966) and famously subtitled his magnum opus on international society *A Study of Order in World Politics* (Bull, 1977).

Yet also political scientists interested in situations of revolution or profound regime change have tended to opt for wider concepts of politics and governance away from steering capacity. In Huntington's (1968) classic *Political Order in Changing Societies*, politics, rule or governance is not limited to the steering of the political system. Indeed, the order is fundamentally dependent on a series of economic, social and more narrowly political (institutional) processes. And those processes are important to having a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of that 'political order'.

Power and governance

Defining governance in terms of order prepares the ground to see the problematiques which a diffusion of power may prompt in international affairs (and in its analysis). To see that relationship, it is important from the start to keep the conceptual substance of power and governance distinct. In other words, it is important to see that governance and power are connected. Equally important, however, is that one does not try to reduce one to the other. Although all visions of order imply visions of power, and vice versa, order is not reducible to power, nor vice versa.

There has been a consistent tendency to conflate the two, or reduce one to the other. When Dahl (1961) famously answered the question 'Who governs?', he did want to understand the type of political order – pluralist or elitist – in a modern democracy. He derived the answer from an analysis of power. As critics were quick to point out, that was not enough to account for the political order at large. Yet, instead of keeping the concepts apart and seeing how they may relate in various ways to each other, the critics, too, tended to reduce one to the other, and hence added up more and more factors into the concept of power (for a partial exception, see Bachrach and Baratz [1970]). And hence in a comparable, if reverse move, Lukes (1974) tried to conceptualize power as personal autonomy in terms of his three dimensions of power – that is, in terms of order understood as a structure of domination. This move is comparable to Dahl because, again, power analysis and the analysis of order are reduced to each other. It is done in reverse, since now power is not used to understand order, but order (three-dimensional power) to understand individual power (autonomy, freedom). Moreover, Lukes, like many others, sometimes uses the term 'power' for all these levels. Adding Foucault to the fray, Barnett and Duvall (2005a) simply pursue this reductionist approach if global governance is what is now understandable through four types of power, as the text sometimes suggests. And, if this is not the case, they leave governance ultimately under-determined by offering a mere (and known) typology of power concepts.

Hence although power and governance are intrinsically linked, there are good reasons to keep them conceptually apart. One is what I have called the 'overload-fallacy' of power conceptual analysis (Guzzini, 1993), showing that ultimately the concept of power becomes simply unwieldy when scholars attempt to include all aspects of a power analysis, from personal autonomy to cause and influence, from social domination to impersonal rule. Knowing about structural power is not enough to understand structures of power (domination). And trying to fuse the two is not useful nor can it be made without producing meta-theoretical contradictions.

A second reason is more tied to the implicit philosophical bias with which the analysis is carried out if the distinction between power and order is not upheld. Power is ubiquitous. From here it is only a small step to put power at the centre of the understanding of politics and also political order. And this is an almost self-evident step for certain traditions in political theory which are inspired by, although not reducible to, the Machiavellian turn in the understanding of politics, such as political realism, Marxism and also Foucault. It is surely

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