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**Donald W. Jackson on Who Governs the Globe? Edited by Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 433pp.**

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**Abstract**

A review of:

Who Governs the Globe? Edited by Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 433pp.

**Keywords**

Globalization, Governance, International organizations, Privatization, International criminal justice, Authority

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**Who Governs the Globe? Edited by Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 433pp.**

The essays collected in this book are intended to identify the variety of actors who may be engaged in global governance, their dynamic interactions, and the outcomes that result. This important objective responds critically to the experience, shared by too many scholars, of focusing on structures and relations—especially the familiar fundamentals of sovereignty—as though they might endure without essential change. Instead, important changes in structures and relationships ought to capture our attention, as they do in this book through the contributions of sixteen authors. They urge that any understanding of global governance must consider the constancy of change.

The three editors begin with an overview in Chapter One, “Who governs the globe?” They describe a global policy arena that is filled with a plethora of potential actors: “international organizations, corporations, professional associations, advocacy groups, and the like” (1). These actors not only work within current global structures to seek outcomes they desire, they are also “active agents who want new structures and rules (or different rules) to solve problems, change outcomes, and transform international life” (1). Thus, studies that focus only (or chiefly) on nation-state actors will be ill-equipped to understand the “kaleidoscope” of activities that is now displayed in global politics, for “[o]nly a small fraction of global governance activity involves state representatives negotiating only with one another” (6).

Avant, Finnemore, and Sell identify changes that have been particularly important in the functional realities experienced in the past twenty-five years or so. The first, globalization, is the transformation of spatial interactions and organizations toward transnational, intercontinental, or global scale. The second change, privatization and deregulation, represents the relative decline of state action and the consequent rise of non-governmental economic actors in the public sector. The third change is the rise and application of new technologies that have transformed the implications of time and distance. Finally, the end of the Cold War transformed alliances and relationships, and led to the rise of new “networks” that may be responsive to Western values and influence. At the time of the demise of the Soviet Union, not many scholars would have anticipated the networks of interests and the rise of conflicts that characterize the world today.

The five sources of authority considered by the editors are: 1) institution-based authority, derived from holding a position in an established organizational structure; 2) delegation-based authority, commonly contributed by assignments from state or sub-state agencies; 3) expertise-based authority, based on specialized knowledge or skills; 4) principle-based authority, grounded on shared values or moral authority; and 5) capacity-based authority, based on perceived competence (11-14). Global governors exercise their authority in setting agendas and addressing issues in various ways: by making rules that govern identified issues; by implementation and enforcement; and by monitoring, identifying, and adjudicating outcomes (monitoring the feedback from actions).

Who Governs the Globe? consists of thirteen chapters. The first five substantive chapters (Chapters Two through Six) examine the dynamics through which changes in authority for governance occur. Taking length into account, I will focus on the creation of international criminal tribunals in Chapter Two and on the construction of authority in the European Union in

Chapter Six. The next six chapters (Chapters Seven through Twelve) examine authority dynamics and governance outcomes. This review will focus on gatekeepers and issue adoption in Chapter Eight. Finally, in Chapter Thirteen the editors sum up—on authority, legitimacy, and accountability in global politics.

In Chapter Two, Allison Danner and Erik Voeten ask the question: “Who is running the international criminal justice system?” (35-71). They consider the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia (ICTY, 1993) and for Rwanda (ICTR, 1994), but not the International Criminal Court (founded in 2002, which now has 114 state-members). However, the ICC has not yet prosecuted a case through full trial to conclusion.

Who have been the judges of the ICTY and the ICTR, how was their authority derived, what goals have they accomplished, and whose interests have they served? Not surprisingly, the authors find that powerful states have been represented and have succeeded in influencing outcomes. Through the course of their prosecutions these states have developed more specific applications and interpretations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The authors spend several pages reviewing international criminal tribunals through the perspectives of theoretical orientation, rationalism and constructivism, but they do so without adding much to our understanding of such tribunals. Later, they illustrate that the ICTY has been dominated by judges from the West and the ICTR by African judges. Sixty-seven percent of tribunal judges were judges at the time of their election, mostly from appellate courts. However, the authors do not actually assess the efficacy of these tribunals relative to the egregious human rights violations that were prosecuted, or whether they had relatively effective outcomes. It still remains to be seen whether agents of powerful states will be brought before international criminal tribunals and whether international prosecutors and judges will have the independence and power to uphold international criminal standards when challenged.

Kathleen R. McNamara considers the construction of authority in the European Union in Chapter Six. The broadest question raised is about the authority and, in turn, legitimacy of European institutions (153). One persistent question is the perceived democratic deficit in several EU institutions. Such institutions continue to be challenged because of their novelty and their distance from ordinary citizens. It is not clear how representative democracy might function effectively in such institutions, given the distance that separates ordinary European citizens even from their sometimes duly-elected representatives, and the chronically low voter turnout for EU elections. Indeed, how may EU authority become a vibrant social reality, rather than merely a set of rules governing economic relationships? McNamara argues that sovereign, territorial states may well be left behind: “Instead, the EU can be characterized as postmodern in form, made up of overlapping and fragmented governance structures that are not territorially exclusive and where sovereignty is located at different levels of governance, depending on the issue area” (175).

Charli Carpenter's Chapter Eight studies the role played by key authorities in transforming issue domains into problems that may prove relevant to advocacy networks, here specifically focused on child rights networks. Transnational gatekeepers may thus be engaged with the definition of issues that sometimes lead to the emergence of new norms. Issue adoption occurs when an issue is championed by at least one key player in a network, but there is little systematic empirical

evidence to explain why that occurs. The “intrinsic nature” of an issue may explain its success in contributing to new international norms.

The four chapters reviewed briefly above are only a sample of the works collected in this volume. Avant, Finnemore, and Sell’s conclusion in the final chapter is that, “Authority in contemporary global life has many sources” (357). While they hope that their book represents only the beginning of research on global governors, it is an important addition to the work of others who seek appropriate understanding of contemporary institutional and functional changes in global governance. Those who work in this arena are certainly aware of the challenges we may confront in sustaining effective representative democracy in emerging international, transnational, and supranational institutions. There is perhaps no better example than in the United States, for we can easily see the great distance that separates political understanding in the US from the efforts to understand the nature, activities, and influences of contemporary global governors that are presented in Who Governs the Globe? This book is a good start for those who are prepared to be challenged, though the way forward may be fraught with obstacles that threaten our capacities to understand new relationships and to develop new strategies for holding accountable those who are engaged in global governance.

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