

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

A Review of Multilateralism
and International Organizations

Vol. 12 No. 1 Jan.–Mar. 2006

Abstracts

Legitimacy, Transparency, and Information Technology: The World Trade Organization in an Era of Contentious Trade Politics



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The legitimacy of international trade rule making and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been subjects of increasing debate. Non-governmental organizations, in particular, have criticized the lack of democratic accountability and thus the legitimacy of trade policymaking. This effort has included the development of transnational campaigns and networks, facilitated by information and communications technologies, to shed light on the trade rule-making process. At the same time, transparency has become the minimal standard for accountability in both the public and private sector. We review the WTO's modest improvements in external transparency in response to these pressures. Drawing on the experiences of a number of WTO members that have responded to critics of their trade policymaking processes by a limited increase in transparency, we conclude that similar efforts at the WTO will be an insufficient response to critics and fall short of what is needed to seriously address legitimacy questions. **KEYWORDS:** World Trade Organization, legitimacy, transparency, information technology, trade policy.

The Global Compact: Shifting the Politics of International Development?



Jean-Philippe Thérien and Vincent Pouliot

The UN Global Compact epitomizes the current state of the politics of international development in three distinct ways. First, the Compact illustrates a major turn in development thinking. After decades of hostile relations, the UN and business now acknowledge their common interest in the promotion of sustainable development. Second, the Compact brings to light the gradual emergence of more inclusive forms of global governance, in response to the failure of traditional mechanisms of development cooperation. Third, ongoing discussions about the Global Compact attest to the competing worldviews that structure today's development debate. Overall, the Compact demonstrates that, beyond its ever changing dynamics, international development ultimately remains a political, rather than a technical, process. **KEYWORDS:** Global Compact, development, United Nations, multilateralism, public-private partnerships.

The World Bank as a Transnational Expertised Institution



Asunción Lera St. Clair

The World Bank has become an expertised transnational institution and thus subject to the problems of expertise identified by social studies of science. The legitimacy and credibility of the Bank's expertise is drawn through a circular process between the knowledge it produces and the audiences that legitimize that knowledge. Untangling such circularity is crucial because global poverty and development are not simple social facts awaiting to be described or predicted. Given that processes of knowledge formation and the institutionalization of expertise are in themselves political exercises, the Bank's knowledge shapes global governance. This article calls for constructive engagement of academics on the way knowledge is produced and distributed by global institutions. **KEYWORDS:** poverty, expertise, World Bank, knowledge, legitimacy.

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.