
Article:
Newman, E orcid.org/0000-0002-2414-5269 (2018) The EU Global Strategy in a Transitional International Order. Global Society, 32 (2). pp. 198-209. ISSN 1360-0826

https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2018.1450732

Pre-publication contribution to *Festschrift* tribute to A.J.R. Groom, published in *Global Society*, March 2018: https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2018.1450732

The EU Global Strategy in a Transitional International Order

Edward Newman

John Groom's many contributions to International Relations scholarship focus – among other topics – upon two interlinked themes. Firstly, this work engages with the nature and scope of the 'European project', and in particular the international relations of Western Europe. In this, Groom explores the EU and its place in the world, but he has also broken new ground in developing the (neo)functionalist theme in various contexts.[1] Secondly, Groom's work has explored a wide range of topics related to the record, challenges and prospects for international organisations and global governance.[2] This reflects a deep commitment to multilateralism as an essential aspect of a peaceful, just international society, while being sensitive to the realities of power.

This article will explore both of these themes in parallel in order to consider the prospects for the EU's role as a global leader in a transitional international order, based on the assumption that multilateral principles will remain at the heart of global governance and, in the words of Groom, multilateralism will remain "a way of life in Europe."[3] However, this article is less optimistic than Groom's work about the EU's future in this area, as long as the EU remains wedded to a model of global governance which is increasingly out of touch with contemporary realities, and because there are serious doubts about the normative and political authority of the EU in global perspective.

The article will make a number of observations about the EU's global role in the context of fundamental shifts which suggest that the locus of political and economic power is increasingly situated in the non-Western world. This has significant implications for the viability of the EU's global agenda, and one of the core vehicles of that agenda, the architecture of global governance. The framework for this article therefore explores the political and normative traction of the EU, the prospects for

[1] A.J.R. Groom, "Neofunctionalism: a case of mistaken identity", *Political Science*, Vol.30,
[2] Paul Graham Taylor and A.J.R. Groom, *International Organisation* (London: Frances Pinter, 1978; A.J.R. Groom and Paul Graham Taylor, *Frameworks for international co-operation* (London: Burns & Oates, 1990); A.J.R. Groom and Dominic Powell, "From World Politics to Global Governance - A Theme in Need of a Focus", *Contemporary International Relations* (New York: Pinter Publishers, 1994); Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira and A.J.R. Groom, "'Mutual solidarity' within the EU common foreign and security policy: What is the name of the game?" *International Politics,* Vol.47, No. 6 (2010), pp. 596-616.
[3] A.J.R.Groom, 'Multilateralism as a way of life in Europe', in Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman, eds., *Multilateralism Under Challenge? Power, International Order, and Structural Change*, Tokyo: UN University Press, 2006.

global governance – given that European external action is inherently multilateral – and the changing global environment. This changing environment is defined by the relative increase in economic and political power and influence of countries such as China, India, Russia and Brazil, amongst others – countries which have demands which often put them at odds with the traditional guardians of international order. In turn, there are also changes in the challenges which confront international collective action mechanisms. At stake is whether the EU can successfully navigate a terrain of competing pressures, given the changing landscape as well as international political challenges.

A key starting point for this analysis is the concept of a transitional international order. The 'international order' – as a coherent, unified set of practices – is a problematic idea. Much debate focuses on whether the liberal – or 'Western-led' – international order has come to an end, and if the world is entering a new phase. Yet these are not discrete or neat phases or models where one ends and another begins, and there can be multiple forms and understandings of 'international order' operating in parallel. Nevertheless, it is broadly agreed that the international norms and institutions which regulate international relations – whether or not this is described as international order – are under transition and arguably under challenge. In this context, the European Union's hopes to expand its global strategy around a reinvigorated vision of global governance are ambitious and potentially hazardous. As it engages with the world more, the EU will become embroiled in the political conflicts which result from the systemic changes of the transitional international order, as the relative power and influence of states rises and declines. As a consequence, the existing institutions and principles of global governance – in which the EU is heavily invested as a means of projecting European influence and pursuing its interests – are coming under increased strain. A further key starting point concerns the normative authority and reach of the EU – its 'normative power' – in the context of rapidly evolving internal and international circumstances.

Considering the global role of the EU in a shifting international order, in conjunction with the evolving challenges faced by global governance, raises a number of questions: How effective are the existing values and institutions of global governance in responding to evolving challenges and facilitating collective action? How is the rise of nationalism and protectionism affecting international commitments to global governance, and its capacity to address pressing global challenges? Are conventional, state-centric approaches to multilateral collective action effective in the face of complex 21st Century challenges? How have changes in the international order – in particular in terms of economic relationships – affected the capacity of existing forms of global governance? How can institutions of global governance be reformed in a way that makes them more effective, legitimate, and inclusive?

The rest of this article will explore the prospects for the EU's 2016 Global Strategy in the context of these questions, around three principal trends and challenges for global

governance: political and normative challenges, legitimacy challenges, and systemic challenges. The article argues that the prospects for the EU's global role are limited as long as the EU remains committed to traditional forms of global governance, since the forward-looking aspects of the Global Strategy are insufficiently radical. Moreover, the normative authority of the EU – based upon liberal values – is increasingly in retreat as non-Western states challenge existing norms and Western-dominated principles of governance. This results in the weakening traction of EU authority – given the growing salience of alternative narratives – but also a self-imposed circumspection and pragmatism within Europe as European elites recognize the importance of working with powerful global actors which do not share Europe's worldview.

The EU's Global Strategy

The 2016 State of the Union Address of the President of the EU Commission suggested that "Our European Union is, at least in part, in an existential crisis".[4] Similarly, the 2016 EU Global Strategy stated that "We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned".[5] The general tone of European debate, amongst most national leaders and EU policy staff, has been about the need to pull the union together to prevent an unraveling of the European project, and focus upon core European interests – including security – rather than global norms.

Nevertheless, at its core, the EU – and European elites generally – remain essentially committed to the post-Second World War international order, based upon liberal norms and a network of governance regimes. It is clear that the EU must strengthen its engagement with a broader range of international stakeholders, but the assumptions which underlie this engagement are increasingly in question. The 2016 Global Strategy expressed a commitment to "global norms and the means to enforce them", and in particular a "strong UN as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order".[6] Therefore, "Guided by the values on which it is founded, the EU is committed to a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, which ensure peace, human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to the global commons".[7] As a part of this vision, the Global Strategy commits the EU to a more active and influential European presence, in which "the EU will

[4] Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission. 'State of the Union 2016. Towards a Better Europe – A Europe that Protects, Empowers and Defends'. Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication (European Commission), 16 September 2016.
[5] High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the European Commission. 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy'. Brussels: European External Action Service, 2016, p.7.
[6] *Ibid*., p.10 and p.39.
[7] *Ibid*., p.39.

strengthen its voice and acquire greater visibility and cohesion", including increasingly unified representation of the Euro area in the International Monetary Fund.[8]

In policy terms, the Global Strategy states that the EU "will lead by example" by implementing commitments on sustainable development and climate change, including the Paris agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.[9] The Strategy also reflects a commitment to arms control agreements and the further strengthening of free trade regimes. There are also ostensibly progressive ideas related to sustainable access to the global commons, multilateral digital governance, responsible space behaviour, more effective conflict prevention, the detection of and response to global pandemics, and working with non-state actors.

The Global Strategy stresses the importance of reform of the UN and International Financial Institutions, based on the principles of accountability, representation, responsibility, effectiveness and transparency, noting that "Resisting change risks triggering the erosion of such institutions and the emergence of alternative groupings to the detriment of all EU Member States".[10] However, this commitment to reform does not respond directly to the concerns of groupings such as the BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, whose demands for greater participation in international regimes go much further than that to which the EU is apparently prepared to commit.

There is a strong assumption of the potential for EU leadership in the Global Strategy. It states that the EU will "act as an agenda-shaper, a connector, coordinator and facilitator within a networked web of players".[11] This echoes earlier debates about the concept of 'normative power' and Europe's capacity to shape norms related to a range of policy areas, and it provides a useful context to an analysis of the EU's potential to play a leadership role in support of global governance. According to the 'normative power Europe' idea, the EU's constitutive principles have internalized certain values within collective European society and policy.[12] In particular, peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are considered to be foundational and indivisible to the collective European identity, and in turn provide a normative worldview which has an impact externally through European external policy and through various forms of diffusion.[13] As Manners argues, 'the most

[8] *Ibid*., p.40.
[9] *Ibid*., p.40-41.
[10] *Ibid*., p.39.
[11] *Ibid*., p.43.
[12] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol.40, No.2 (2002), pp.235-258; J.H.H. Weiler and M. Wind, *European Constitutionalism beyond the state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); H. Sjursen, "The EU as a 'Normative' Power: How Can this be?" *Journal of European Public Policy,* Vol.13, No. 2 (2006), pp.235-231.
[13] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?"; Ian Manners,

important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is'.[14]

These cosmopolitan values not only constitute the European identity, but in theory they contribute to a worldview that guides Europe's interaction with external partners – for example, in promoting and supporting democracy, human rights, and good governance. They also represent a standard of practice to aspire to for those who wish to do business with Europe. For those societies in the European neighbourhood who wish to join the EU community, for example, these standards constitute a necessary benchmark to meet. From this perspective, Europe's role as a global actor takes into account – in theory – not only the interests of Europe and European states, but a cosmopolitan commitment to certain standards of human welfare globally.

According to this, Europe is therefore inherently normative as a function of its constitutive principles, and there is evidence of the diffusion effect of liberal values in a range of policy areas, in particular in the near abroad and the European neighbourhood, but also further afield. Moreover, this 'normative power' has been shown to play a role in areas such as conflict resolution,[15] the movement to abolish the death penalty, democracy promotion, amongst others. This debate is relevant to the EU's engagement with global governance since the success of multilateralism rests, in part, upon the traction of certain norms in international politics which are indivisible from the European project. However, an effective role in support of global governance now rests not only upon what the EU is, but also what it does. If the EU is to make global governance a key policy platform for its international role, it will need to be underpinned by the normative reach and credibility of Europe. If the EU has the 'ability to shape conceptions of the "normal" in international relations',[16] then its embrace of multilateralism could signal a leadership role.

However, the EU can no longer rely upon the attraction of its constitutive values for a global role – if it ever could. The idea of the normative power of Europe has been challenged on many fronts, and these challenges remain valid in terms of Europe's Global Strategy. From an empirical perspective, the concept of normative power – how to define and measure it – has been questioned.[17] The internal diversity of the

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"European Union 'Normative Power' and the Security Challenge", *European Security,* Vol.15, No. 4 (2006), pp.405-421; T.A. Börzel and T. Risse, "From Europeanisation to Diffusion", *West European Politics,* Vol.35, No.1 (2012), pp.1-19.

[14] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in terms?', p.252.

[15] Nathalie Tocci, *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[16] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in terms?", p.239.

[17] T. Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type. *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol.49, No. 6 (2011), pp.1183-1204; E. Kavalski, "The struggle for recognition of normative powers: Normative power Europe and normative power China in context", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 48, No. 2, (2013), pp.247-267; Antje Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics. Contested Norms and International*

European Union, in particular after waves of enlargement, presents a wide range of values and interests which defy the idea of a fixed, coherent value system. Questions have similarly been raised about the tension between the interests of the most powerful European states and their commitment to a common European position in external action.[18]

Many scholars have also raised concerns about the legitimacy of the 'normative power' concept, whether promoted by example or through policies. It is all too easy to see in Europe's 'normative power' an assumption of superiority over 'other' systems of justice and politics which it seeks to 'civilize'.[19] Clearly, the history of Europe and its engagement with regions across the globe – including colonization – raises sensitivities in terms of its own capacity to lead in relation to political and social organization. This legacy must be taken into account by European stakeholders in any attempt to promote the EU's role in global debates about justice and human rights, for example. The legitimacy of this normative authority is further brought into question by the rising assertiveness and power of non-Western states which are increasingly challenging and sometimes resisting Western-led norms. Moreover, the fragmentation and divisions within Europe – which cast doubt upon the integrity of the European project – also weaken its attempts to project normative leadership globally.

As the Global Strategy notes, "credibility is essential" for taking a leadership role.[20] It also states, a number of times, that "The EU will lead by example".[21] As a huge collective economic power, no one can doubt that the EU's influence in global trade and investment multilateralism will continue to have traction. However, given the internal divisions and fragmentation which exist within the EU, and the challenges to its global role which are inherent in a transitional international order, there are serious questions about the global leadership of the EU in political and normative terms. The following section will present the sources of these challenges, which confront both the EU and the values and institutions of global governance.

Challenges to International Order and Conventional Global Governance

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Encounters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); H. Sjursen, "The EU as a 'Normative' Power: How Can this be?" *Journal of European Public Policy,* Vol. 13, No. 2 (2006), pp.235-231.

[18] Adrian Hyde-Price, "Normative' power Europe: a realist critique", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2006), pp.217-234.

[19] Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.33, No. 3 (2005), pp.613-636; Michelle Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power. *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol. 45, No. 5, (2007), pp.1041-1064; Z. Laïdi, *EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: Normative Power and Social Preferences* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[20] High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the European Commission, op.cit., p.44.

[21] *Ibid*., p.40, 43.

Three principal trends and challenges have far-reaching implications for the EU's global engagement and the assumptions which lie behind its Global Strategy, and in particular its commitment to multilateral global governance. Given that the EU has so much invested in the values and institutions of multilateralism, and this provides a key vehicle for its global role, the challenges which confront global governance are also challenges which confront the EU's Global Strategy.

Political and normative challenges

Firstly, global governance faces a number of political and normative challenges, some of which are directly associated with the EU space. The rise of nationalism and protectionism globally, but notably in some Western countries, raise questions about the ability and willingness of powerful states to provide and maintain international public goods, traditionally regarded as being a mainstay of global governance. In addition, political challenges related to the transitional international order are exposing diverging interests amongst states whose support for global governance is essential, and acute conflicts related to 'burden sharing'. The US is the key example of this, as a country which has traditionally been the primary sponsor of international organisations, but which is increasingly frustrated with the returns from its investment. The attitude of President Donald Trump illustrates this perfectly, although there were signs that the country was retreating from some of its international engagements prior to Trump's election. The Presidential Memorandum Regarding Withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, issued in January 2017, was quite instructive: "It is the policy of my Administration to represent the American people and their financial well-being in all negotiations, particularly the American worker, and to create fair and economically beneficial trade deals that serve their interests. Additionally, in order to ensure these outcomes, it is the intention of my Administration to deal directly with individual countries on a one-on-one (or bilateral) basis in negotiating future trade deals…to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages." In tone, this is representative of the broader US retreat from the provision of global goods and a shift towards protectionism – and perhaps also isolationism – related both to the declining capacity of the US and the rise of populist nationalism in that country. It is thus still pertinent to ask if the 'institutional bargain' upon which the US created and maintained multilateral arrangements – accepting constraints upon its foreign policy and the material costs of supporting public goods, in return for regularity in international interactions and having its interests reflected in the international institutional architecture – is breaking down.[22] This raises significant doubts about international order and global governance. Given that the US has been an essential supporter of global governance since the Second World War, the neo-isolationist signals emanating from the US since the beginning of 2017, even if they transpire to be exaggerated, raise questions about the sustainability of existing forms of global

[22] Edward Newman, *A Crisis of Global Institutions? Multilateralism and International Security*, Routledge, 2007, p.2.

governance.

In contrast, in a kind of historic reversal of roles, at the 2017 Davos international leaders' meeting China's President Xi Jinping made a plea for the maintenance of an open global economy, warning of the dangers of protectionism. Some have seen this as a leadership vision, touching as he did upon migration, globalization, development and global governance. However, there are doubts as to the capacity of China – and groupings such as the BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – to take on such a role. The 'rising powers' have not presented a viable alternative vision of international order, or a convincing commitment to sponsor global public goods.

Participation in decision-making and representation in the instruments of global governance are also increasingly contested, again raising fundamental doubts about the viability of the architecture of global governance. The rules of procedure and control established in many institutions of global governance in the mid-20th Century are considered by many states to be out of touch with contemporary realities. Specifically, many of these multilateral arrangements are perceived to be weighted in favour of Western interests, and under-represent other regions of the world, including regions which are experiencing a resurgence in influence and economic power.[23] A recurring demand of the BRICS grouping in terms of international financial governance relates to reform in both the prevailing policies and the operating principles of international regimes. This frustration is almost always tied closely to the manner in which decisions are made, due to the constitutive nature of many of the global economic governance institution. These outmoded operating procedures challenge the legitimacy of these organizations – at least in the eyes of rising powers. Voting rights and representation in international financial regimes has been a major issue of contention, 'which continues to undermine the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of the IMF.'[24] A further recurring theme in the discourse of rising powers is that 'the global economic governance system must reflect the profound changes in the global economic landscape, and the representation and voice of emerging markets and developing countries should be increased.'[25] This represents a powerful demand for the regimes of global governance to better reflect the evolving balance of power, in terms of control of the agenda and decision-making processes. However, there is ample evidence that rising powers are not fundamentally challenging the underlying principles of international order, but rather they seek to

[23] This discussion draws upon Edward Newman and Benjamin Zala, 'Rising Powers and Order Contestation: Disaggregating the Normative from the Representational', *Third World Quarterly*, published online November 2017.

[24] BRICS. Ufa Declaration (Ufa, the Russian Federation, 9 July 2015): http://brics2016.gov.in/upload/files/document/5763c20a72f2d7thDeclarationeng.pdf

[25] Chinese President's Office, "President Xi Jinping Gives Joint Interview To Media from BRICS Countries", 19 March 2013: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1023070.shtml

gain greater access to, and representation in, the institutions and processes which define, administer and uphold international rules.[26]

As a result of frustration at the slow pace of change and reform, parallel forms of multilateralism have emerged, representing a fragmentation of global governance, and risking the further erosion of traditional organisations such as the UN, World Bank and WTO. Some of the new BRICS initiatives can therefore be seen as the establishment of parallel, or even competing, regimes. The New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserves Arrangement – with a total volume of $100 billion – came into effect in 2015. This will fund joint large-scale projects in transport and energy infrastructure and in industrial development – thus providing an alternative to the Western-dominated World Bank and IMF. The BRICS Export Credit Agencies and the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism expand the BRICS countries financial cooperation and promote investment amongst BRICS members. It is interesting that the EU's Global Strategy warns that a lack of reform in existing international organizations risks the emergence of alternative groupings, because surely this is no longer just a risk. It is already happening.

In addition, this transitional international order has generated normative contestation about the manner in which key international issues – such as human right and armed conflict – should be managed, and this has often stymied existing international organisations, such as the UN in relation to the Syrian conflict. Following the Libyan intervention of 2011, China and Russia repeatedly blocked UN action on Syria, cautioning against 'Western interventionism' and stressing the importance of Syria's legitimate government. This pointed to a tension between pluralist approaches to human rights – which are underpinned by a Westphalian, statist worldview, and an emphasis upon noninterference – and a more liberal worldview, which has a contingent view of sovereignty.[27] These political and normative conflicts have generated serious obstacles to fruitful collaboration in the instruments of global governance between powerful countries. The EU has been associated with a assertively liberal approach to international human rights – reflected in its human security doctrine[28] – but this is clearly not in line with the worldview of the rising powers which will likely define the changing international order. Again, this suggests that the success of the EU's Global Strategy will require it to revisit – and possibly revise – some of the foundations of its external action.

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[26] Edward Newman and Benjamin Zala, 'Rising Powers and Order Contestation: Disaggregating the Normative from the Representational'.

[27] This discussion draws upon Edward Newman, "What prospects for common humanity in a divided world? The scope for RtoP in a transitional international order", *International Politics*, Vol. 53, No.1 (2016) pp.32–48. See also X. Pu, "Socialisation as a two-way process: Emerging powers and the diffusion of international norms", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics,* Vol. 5, No. 4, (2012), pp.341–367.

[28] Mary Martin and Mary Kaldor, eds., *The European Union and human security: external interventions and missions*, (London: Routledge, 2009).

Legitimacy challenges to global governance

Many instruments of global governance, reflecting an ethos of 'high politics' dominated by elites, do not uphold 21st Century expectations of governance, including principles of accountability, transparency and representation. This is a further weakness that the EU will need to overcome if it wishes to continue to invest a major part of its global interactions in global governance. Civil society actors have struggled, with very limited success, for greater access and inclusion, in the face of lack of reform and stagnation within existing multilateral organisations.[29] This lack of progress has resulted in a high level of disengagement and antipathy towards multilateralism on the part of many citizens, for whom trust in international organisations is severely tested.[30] The 'anti-globalization movement' directly associates international organizations – particularly international financial institutions – with a hegemonic, neo-liberal agenda. But more generally, in liberal societies – traditionally, the key supporters of global governance – this has contributed to declining support for multilateralism. The election of President Donald Trump and the UK's referendum vote to leave the European Union are both a reflection of this broader antipathy.

Past efforts to integrate non-governmental organisations and citizens' groups into global governance have generated some limited progress and point to future promise.[31] As an example, the appointment process for UN Secretary-General António Gutterres in 2016 was widely seen as the most transparent and inclusive in the history of the organization, in large part because of the involvement of civil society.[32] The '1 for 7 Billion' movement represented hundreds of civil society groups globally in a widely-supported campaign to reform the appointment process of the Secretary-General in order to make it more meritocratic. The appointment process was certainly more transparent than any which had occurred before, with formal candidates being nominated and participating in public consultations in which they shared their vision for the UN and their plans for dealing with the many challenges which exist. The EU's Global Strategy also makes a commitment to work with civil

[29] Thomas G. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations and how to Fix it*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016).

[30] Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and William C. Smith, *Protest and Collaboration: Transnational Civil Society Networks and the Politics of Summitry and Free Trade in the Americas*, 2001, pp. 4-6; Joseph E. Stiglitz, "Globalism's Discontents", *The American Prospect*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2002, pp. 1-14.

[31] Nora McKeon, *The United Nations and Civil Society: Legitimating Global Governance – Whose Voice?*, (London: Zed Books, 2009); UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, 'Civil Society and Disarmament 2014: The Importance of Civil Society in United Nations and Intergovernmental Processes', NY: United Nations Publications (30 Sept. 2015); John E. Trent, *Modernizing the United Nations System: Civil Society's Role in Moving from International Relations to Global Governance*, (Berlin: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006).

[32] This draws upon Edward Newman, 'Secretary-General', in Sam Daws and Thomas Weiss eds., *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

society in a more inclusive form of global governance.[33] Yet global governance remains fundamentally inter-governmental, and this is damaging its reputation and losing public support, which in turn undermines state support for public goods and fuels protectionism. But aside from questions of legitimacy, the state centricity of global governance has also constrained its effectiveness, given that many global challenges defy a Westphalian conception of collective action.

Systemic challenges

In many ways 21st Century challenges defy the constitutive nature and capacities of conventional multilateral approaches and arrangements, resulting in functional failings and problems of 'output legitimacy', defined as the ability of an entity to perform according to reasonable expectations of effectiveness. The evolving environment has been described as 'post-Westphalian': a world where notions of inviolable and equal state sovereignty are breaking down or otherwise challenged; where states are no longer the sole or even the most important actors in certain areas of international politics; where the 'national interest' cannot be defined in one-dimensional terms; where power takes many different forms, both soft and hard; and where the distinction between 'domestic' and 'international' politics is irreversibly blurred.[34] The complexity of some challenges has increased exponentially, and for others – such as internet governance – state-centric approaches are arguably unsuitable. A number of key areas of international policy are arguably no longer – if they ever were – state centric in terms of their nature and the type of framework which is necessary to tackle them. Non-state actors and trans-border stresses are key features of armed conflict in the 21st Century, and threats to international security are more likely to emanate from weak or failing, rather than strong, states. Civil wars – rather than the interstate wars between great powers envisaged by the founders of the UN as the primary challenge to peace – have been the defining form of organized violence. Climate change, international finance, and global health – amongst many other policy areas – also arguably defy a state-centric approach based around national trade-offs and compromises. The result is rising skepticism and declining respect towards traditional international regimes and organizations in terms of their ability to address the most pressing global challenges, which raises the risk of alternative, fragmented forms of multilateralism.

These policy challenges also strain traditional multilateral assumptions, such as what Keohane calls 'diffuse reciprocity,' whereby members can expect to receive roughly equivalent benefits over time, if not necessarily on every decision or occasion.[35] It is increasingly questionable whether this institutionalist logic remains fully valid in the face of the challenges facing global governance in the 21st Century, as the world

[33] High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the European Commission, *op.cit*., p.43.
[34] Edward Newman, *A Crisis of Global Institutions?*, p.4.
[35] Robert O. Keohane, "Reciprocity in International Relations," *International Organization* Vol. 40, No. 1 (1985) pp.1–27.

becomes ever more divided and challenges become more complex.[36] Alternative multilateral arrangements established amongst the BRICS countries are a reflection of a shift away from the idea of global governance towards differentiated governance, and the rise of nationalism and protectionism in parts of the Western world suggest that the principles of reciprocity may be eroding.

These systemic challenges suggest that rigid multilateral institutions cannot hope to be respected indefinitely when their constitutive principles and performance do not meet expectations in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness. The result is that powerful states circumvent established international organizations in key areas, and also form alternative and sometimes informal coalitions for taking action. Global governance remains at the heart of the EU's external action, but it is increasingly questionable whether this will be an effective vehicle for the EU's Global Strategy.

Conclusion

Debates about global governance have been dominated by ideas related to the emergence and resilience of international norms, including questions of leadership, norm adaptation and contestation. These debates remain relevant to understanding the challenges faced by global governance, since changes in international order have clearly strained the effectiveness of some multilateral organisations and the norms which underpin them. In particular, the transitional international order has exposed problems of legitimacy in terms of the constitutive makeup of the instruments of global governance, since they are not sufficiently representative of the shifts in influence and authority in international relations which have occurred in recent decades. This aspect of global governance is a vital realm of interaction between different stakeholders in global governance, including the EU, the US, China, Russia, India, Brazil, and other countries. Re-envisioning global governance involves, to a significant degree, a renegotiation of rules and institutions amongst such stakeholders, on the basis of mutual interests. It must start with an acknowledgement of how the world has changed since many of the foundations of global governance were established in the second half of the 20th Century.

Even if the EU was not facing severe internal crises, the changing international order is less and less conducive to Europe playing a global leadership role. If 'Normative Power Europe' ever had traction, it is certainly in retreat, in the context of global norm contestation. The Global Strategy emphasizes the need for a "rules based global order…guided by principles" and an "idealistic aspiration". At the same time, the Strategy expresses an "aspiration to transform rather than simply preserve the existing system" of global governance. This can be interpreted as either progressive – in the context of the EU's liberal traditions – or realistic, given that the EU's powerful international partners are making demands which are not being adequately

[36] See Edward Newman, *A Crisis of Global Institutions?*

accommodated by existing forms of institutionalized multilateralism. What is increasingly clear is that the EU's global authority, and its ability to play a role in establishing the architecture of global governance in the future, cannot rest upon its normative influence alone – or perhaps at all. It needs to embrace a more radical transformation of global governance which is a genuine break from the post-war mindset. At the same time, it needs to make a choice about the role that normative principles should play in its global engagement, given that its partnerships with powerful global actors which do not share a liberal outlook will demand ever greater pragmatism on the part of the EU.

About the Author

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