



What is Global Policy?

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The field of global policy focuses on the global as a process (or processes) which creates transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity and interaction, and the new framework of multi-level policy making by public and private actors, which involves and transcends national, international and transnational policy regimes.

We define global policy as having six main foci:

1. Globally relevant risks and collective actions of different kinds (such as common pool resource problems) have become increasingly important as a result of the intensification of globalization over the last five decades. In a densely interconnected world, the fortunes of multiple countries and sometimes all countries are linked and interdependent. Effective policy solutions often require concerted and coordinated action by governments and nation states to tackle common problems. For academic research to engage effectively with these policy issues and problems, it needs to increase the scale, ambitions and purposefulness of its analyses and comparisons.
2. International policy coordination is also proceeding in a wide range of areas, which do not fit into the first category above. For instance, action to promote equal rights and international standards is developing in many different kinds of policy spheres for a number of reasons, including the increasing interconnectedness of public opinion and economic forces- as when companies and western consumers seek assurance that child labour or workers' health are being appropriately regulated in newly industrialized economies. This kind of global pooling of policy regimes has little to do with conventional international relations and requires innovative research to address it.
3. Normative theories of global governance are undergoing rapid development and change, for instance, in thinking about the interplay between democracies, markets, networks and hierarchies. The institutions, informational politics and processes of modern policymaking in the first decades of the twenty-first century will be influenced by the evolution of these ethical and imaginative debates. In addition, the emerging powers on the global stage (for instance India, China, Russia, and Brazil) have often different and competing conceptions of what constitutes global order and relevant policies, and thus an opening has been created for new concepts, themes and theories in the consideration of global governance. The current policy environment has also

seen a series of strong changes in conventional ‘domestic’ policymaking, frequently going beyond a single country focus in three main ways:

4. A change from national level to “bloc” level policymaking is taking place in two main areas. First, in the European Union a great experiment in ‘joining up’ national policy approaches is under way, which has already introduced important changes in how the Union’s 27 component member states make public policies across many sectors. Second, we have seen the development of complex patterns or regionalism, often involving greater economic policy integration, in North and South America, the Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. These patterns have emerged partly as responses to globalization, and partly as attempts to shape it.
5. A transition from single polar to multi-polar governance is under way. Innovative ideas in public policy for the past two decades have been dominated by relatively similar advanced industrial economies. But the next half century will see several regional blocs emerging, based around the EU, the USA, China, India and Latin America, and along with them multiple poles of advanced policy innovations. Each of the different regional blocs will evolve different policy approaches and styles, some of which are likely to have important effects.
6. Innovations in global governance in recent decades have sought to address emerging global risks and challenges. They often mark attempts to overcome weak or fragmented forms of bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation. Specifically, these include different forms of intergovernmental arrangements e.g. the World Bank, IMF and WTO- embodying various levels of legalisation, types of instruments utilized and responsiveness to stakeholders; an increasing number of public agencies –e.g. central bankers- maintaining links with similar agencies in other countries and thus, forming trans governmental networks for the management of various global issues; diverse business actors- e.g. firms, their associations and organisations such as international chambers of commerce- establishing their own transnational regulatory mechanisms to manage issues of global concerns; and public bodies, business actors and NGOs collaborating on a range of development issues, in order to provide novel approaches to social problems through multi-stakeholders’ networks. In sum, modern policymaking is shaped in far broader ways than in previous eras by a wider range of actors. In addition to formal governmental bodies, private corporations, media companies and networks, non-governmental organizations, international and regional bloc organizations, professions and interest groups are all involved in decisive ways. The pluralism of actors does not imply an equivalence of power. On the contrary; contemporary interactions, and attempts at governance, take place in the context of asymmetrical interdependence, with large discrepancies in wealth, other material and non-material resources, and status among countries. Asymmetrical interdependence implies unequal power.